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The chair, just now and usually, was occupied by a little girl, a very little girl, with
a thin face, and straggling flaxen locks. — Page 37.

OUR STREET.

BY
MRS. S. R. GRAHAM CLARK.
AUTHOR OF "YENSIE WALTON."

Take comfort! earth is full of sin,
But also full of God.
The staff supports thy trembling limbs,
While falls the needed rod.
There's sorrow, and Jehovah;
There's toil, and blessed sleep;
Let smiles then blossom round your lips,
As oft as eyelids weep.



BOSTON:
D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY,
32 FRANKLIN STREET.



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MRS. S. R. GRAHAM CLARK.
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Earth's sorrow: earth is full of sin,
But also full of God;
The Lord supports thy trembling limbs,
He is the needed rod,
His name is Jehovah;
Blessed sleep;
His smile then blossom round your lips,
As mine eyeside weep.



BOSTON:
D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY,
32 FRANKLIN STREET.

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DEDICATION.

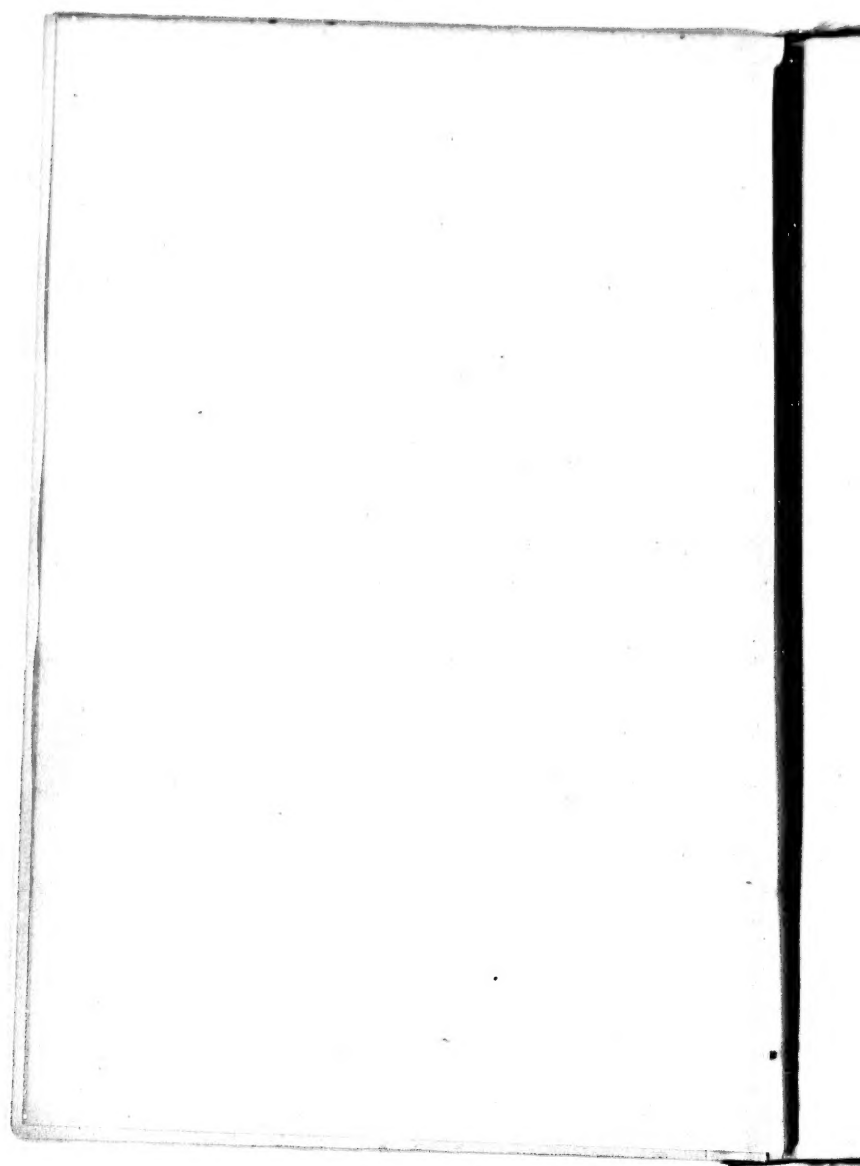
THE remembrance of one for whose pleasure this book was first conceived, but whose eyes will never peruse its pages, clouds this hour. The silver lining of that cloud, beyond all fear of dimming, is that she walks in clearest sunshine, surrounded by angel ministries, unreceding our attentions.

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS
LEFT STILL TO EARTH AND ME—
they are four—
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

Shall I say *especially* to her whose dusky eyes have never shone on me in else but love, whose lips have never opened to me but in blessing, whose name is now and forever the synonym of all true womanly love and faithfulness—MARY.

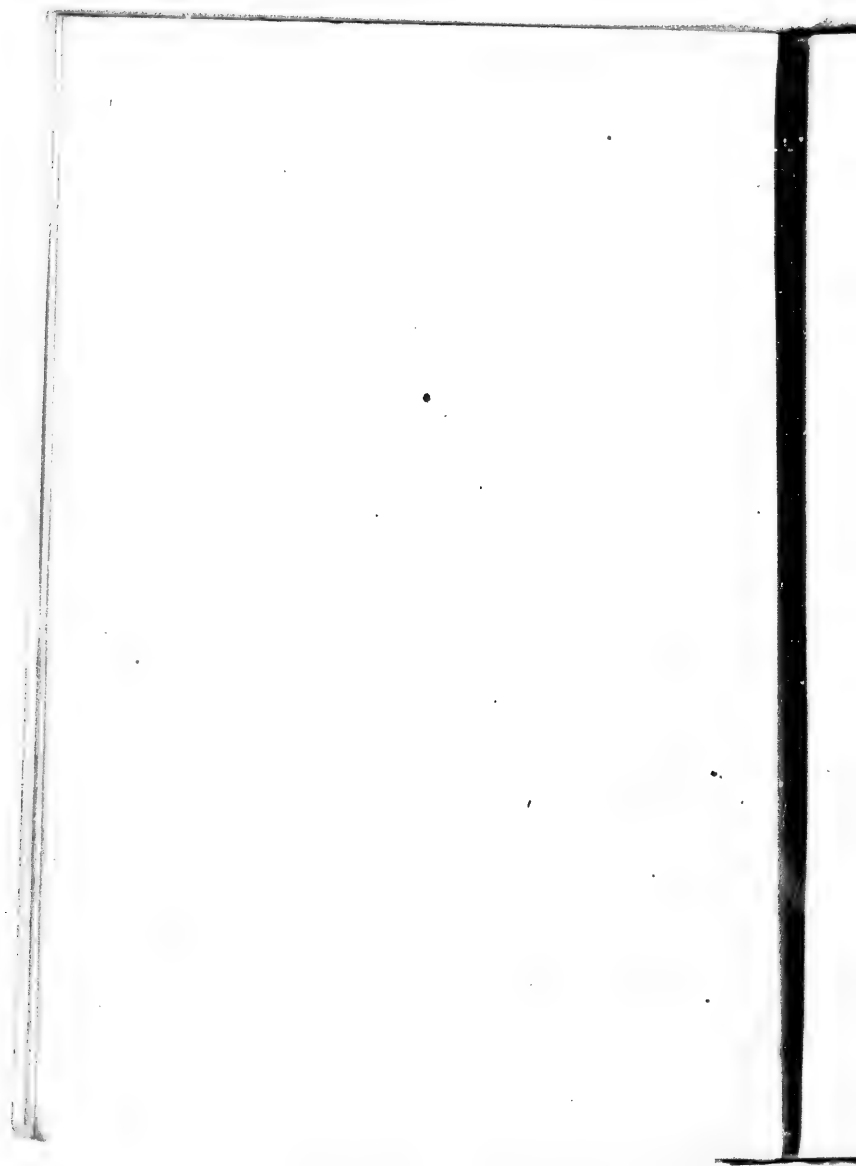
SUSIE R. GRAHAM CLARK.

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OUR STREET.

CHAPTER I.

SOME THINGS ABOUT IT WORTH KNOWING.

IT was in a city. A neat, nice, cozy, comfortable city; a sea-breezy, rambling, country-suggestive, sweet-scented city; a busy, mercantile, yet home-happy, well-to-do city. A little old-fashioned, perhaps, in its simple faith in many Bible truths; ultra, somewhat, in its notions of religious and social liberty; a kind of little earthly paradise to certain goodish sort of fanatics — slavery-hating, temperance-loving, liberty-preaching fanatics — fanatics that might be reasonably sup-

posed to hold at least a fifth-cousinship to those who wrote "All men are born free and equal," and who were credulous enough to believe this a rule worthy of acceptance, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Indeed, our city was pronounced by some people—and not the worst people in the world, either—as healthy in its public tone as the breezes that swept its white-winged bay, tossing the hair of the merry-voiced children that played in its streets, rustling the folds of its stars and stripes, swaying its hundreds of mighty-armed trees.

It was, moreover, in a neighborhood, Our Street. A busy, bustling, bread-and-butter earning neighborhood; a cart-wheeling, newspaper-screaming, meat, butter, sugar, salt-dealing neighborhood. A neighborhood where people ate, drank, worked, slept, and got up to repeat it again year by year. A neighborhood where people joyed, suffered, sickened, died; where babes were born to scream

and laugh, pat cakes, make mud-pies, take cholera-infantum and measles, whooping-cough and what not? and live through it all sometimes, drag through it all sometimes, die through it all sometimes, until a day came when the dying ended, and there was a burial.

In short, the whole tragedy of life was enacted continually in our neighborhood; tragedy, and comedy as well, for laughter treads upon tears, moans trip up jokes, merriment pays penance to sorrow, and woe compensates itself in after smiles.

You will understand from this that Our Street was not destitute of homes. Yet there were plenty of shops in it, and all trades were represented there. Grocers, butchers, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, shoe-makers; periodical and confectionery-shops, millinery and fancy-goods stores, a hair-cutting establishment, and even a dining-saloon and *rum-shop* — don't let me forget that!

A *rum-shop* in our city! Surely! — Perhaps I have used too low a term. A drinking-saloon it was. None of your small, dirty, jug-of-whisky

shanties, but a clean, bright-windowed, cheery-looking shop, with polished counters, cut-glass decanters, swinging glass-washer, and a bright-colored, fancy, paper fly-catcher. Ah, I wish flies were the only things they caught there!

But, as I said, though there were plenty of shops, there were homes also. Most of them over these stores, some back of them, a few private houses where the better class lived, and a few tenement-houses where — well, you'll find out soon enough who occupied them.

Of course Our Street was not genteel—not exactly. It was next-door-neighbor to it, though, for on both sides of it ran streets decidedly so, and the horse-car could carry you, any hour, right to the West End, among the *elite*, for six cents.

Then, too, Mr. Jenkins, the rum-seller—excuse me, drinking-saloon-keeper, I mean—was worth quite a sum. He had real velvet furniture in his parlor, and owned a carriage; and although he lived over his establishment, it was in great

grandeur, and his wife and daughters dressed quite up to the styles. Then Lawson, the confectioner, and Hudworth, the periodical man, and the half-a-dozen grocers, were all well-to-do; they kept company, and visited with the next streets.

O, no! Our Street folks were not poor or low, not most of them. Of course there were a few. "The poor always ye have with you," means forever, and our city, and even Our Street, were no exceptions.

It was a long street, and stretched itself just above the bay. Not the front bay, but the back bay, which meant water enough to sail boats sometimes, mud enough to stick boats all times, and scents, at other times, anything but odoriferous, when the summer drought and the summer heat both laid their mighty grasp upon it.

Yes, it was a long street, yet not disagreeably so. Beginning in the city's stir and bustle, it stretched itself far past the noise and turmoil, through oak grove and meadow green, as if to

refresh itself, after labor and din, man's smallness and inability, with God's mighty stretches of green restfulness, and vast resources of blue, quiet, undimmed as they were, by the smoke of consuming heat and greedy gain.

Out along its green stretches the children often went to play, the student sat beneath its trees to study, and great was the warfare waged continually 'twixt school-boy and squirrel as to which should lay in largest winter stores from the rustling boughs that shaded all its lengths. Not all the lengths of the entire street, remember. Where Our Street, proper, began, the trees ended, thenceforth the stores giving it all its cheer and brilliancy.

It boasted at least three fancy goods stores. Their gay ribbons and gayer toys, smart caps, beads and bracelets enlivened Our Street; the great black stoves and shining tins at Mr. Hubbard's suggested warmth and home. The haunches of beef and bottles of pickles, the apples and onions, cranberries and raisins at the grocers' made a hungry man dream of dinner; but they

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SOME THINGS ABOUT IT WORTH KNOWING. 13

couldn't begin to aggravate him like the smell that issued from the saloon kitchen, or the tempting pies and frosted cakes that stared at him through its windows. Then our baker! who ever saw such loaves of bread as his? Long, oval-shaped, delicious loaves; broad, chunky, triple-twined loaves. Such a brown on the top! Light, soft, tempting brown, like the blush on a sable cheek, as if the oven kissed them. And the stacks of gingerbread!!— But we forbear. Our Street certainly looked as if there was enough for its inhabitants to eat.

Then there was the confectioner, who sweetened Our Street. And the periodical man, who furnished sensationalism, weak nerves and dissipation, at one and the same time, and dubbed them brains; and the shoemaker, outside whose tempting window generally stood at least one small, bare-foot urchin, picking out shodding for that future day when his ship should come home.

But don't let me forget that drinking-saloon. Time would fail me to tell all it did for Our

Street! How could we have existed without it? How it kept the air pregnant with rumors of war, soul-refreshing to so large a part of a restless community! Why! it furnished us with a police officer, and kept him busy; sold sticking-plaster and liniments unnumbered for our druggist—who, by-the-way, we forgot to mention,—brought more than one neat little job in the way of good old Dr. Fosby; and the police-court and lawyers! they owed everlasting thanks to it, would have been quite homesick and lonesome without it. To be just honest, our whole city was indebted, one way or another, to that saloon.

To be sure, it did take some of Widow Grafham's trade from her. Women can't buy bonnets and stockings and gloves, when their husbands buy whisky. But Mr. Jenkins was a conscientious man, and made up all Widow Grafham lost, by allowing his wife and daughters to patronize largely at Madame Defoy's, up-town. There is a law of compensation, you know, in this world. What Widow Grafham lost, Madame got, and, as

a matter-of-course, what Drunken So-and-so's wife and children didn't wear, Mr. Jenkins' did. But then So-and-so got inside what made him *feel* as well — for at least thirty minutes — as his wife and children might have *looked*; and that was exactly as good — exactly.

I said Our Street was long. It wasn't broad, however, neither could it be said to be narrow. It was decently both ways, and almost a village in itself. The houses, most of them, were three or four stories high — many of them brick — each story containing from three to five, or from five to seven rooms — a separate family generally inhabiting each story, and sometimes a lodger or two beside. The social standing of the occupants was rated very much according to the loftiness of his or her abiding-place; the poorest, in most cases, being those nearest the skies.

I think, taking it all in all, you will agree with me, reader, that ours was a well-to-do street, comfortable, to express it in one word, after the fashion of little Bry Perkins, who, by-the-by, knew not

a tithe of its advantages. Near as it was to the centre of trade, it was not far removed from rural charms, for the same horse-car route that connected it on one side with the city's busiest thoroughfares, on the other joined it to one of the fairest hamlets that stud our fair land.

Crossing Our Street, just beside the apothecary's, was Next Street, which lost itself in a bridge spanning the bay, and carried foot-passenger and horse-car rider far out into a beautiful village, rich in country charms and city privileges, with palatial homes and comfortable farm-houses, conservatories and nursery gardens, stretches of green woodland and waving grain-fields.

The village had shops of its own, churches, school-houses, temperance societies and literary clubs, and its cemetery was the wonder and delight of its visitors. There were other graveyards in our midst, but nothing comparable with this.

There summer rioted in melody and sweetness; there winter smiled, sun-crowned, and rained her snow-buds on trees of living green; there death

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SOME THINGS ABOUT IT WORTH KNOWING. 17

prophesied of life to come, in abundant bloom and beauty. Daily, when the weather was propitious, the cars carried scores of men and women, boys and girls, to its wide-spread gates.

There childhood wandered on its brook-banks, and lovers crossed its rustic bridges, whispering honied words, unmindful of their close proximity to death. There thoughtful men brooded on life and its uncertainties — and certainties, too, perhaps, — and curious men examined its queerly-wrought arbors, and quaintly fashioned grave-stones. There, beside grassy mounds, Grief shed her tears, yet not such bitter tears, perhaps, as had been hers were the spot forlorn and desolate. It seemed not quite so dread a place to leave our loves, there where the bride sang all day long, and merry children laughed and played, and ate their luncheons 'neath its trees. Here Vanity's advocates vied with each other to see which should make their resting-place most beauteous — forgetting, mayhap, the beauty which makes every place a place of rest, — and poverty hoarded

its littles that their swelling store might purchase their right to make their grave with the rich in their death. There every portion of our city had offered sacrifice—yes, even Our Street was represented there.

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CHAPTER II.

HAD-BEENS AND ARE-NOWS.

AND, in the first place, Widow Grafham was both. She kept a fancy goods store, on the left-hand side of Our Street, as you go from the city to the Oaks; fancy goods, some of which, to be sure, were well past the day when they were to be fancied; for stock had gathered on her hands, from year to year, until she herself knew not half of her possessions. But most of her goods were very desirable, for Mrs. Grafham believed in keeping up to the times, and supplied her shop with articles both necessary and salable.

She and her family occupied the first two floors of a large three-story wooden building, the third

story being hired by one of the Mr. So-and-So's who visited friend Jenkin's saloon, and whose wife consequently did not much increase the widow's trade.

Mrs. Grafham's family just now consisted of herself, Letty, her daughter, and her husband and little boy, and Kiddy, another daughter, who boarded there, though her bright face was seldom seen except on the Sabbath. as the early cars bore her each morning to her employment on the other side of the bay.

The upper stories of the house were only reached by going into the yard, or street; a long flight of uncovered steps leading there from the former, a front hall and carpeted stairs from the latter. This was a *little* inconvenient, to speak mildly; but Widow Grafham had become so used to inconveniences that it is quite questionable if she would not have been homesick without them. She pooh-poohed at young folks who were afraid of a little rain and trouble, yet truth compels us to state that she shirked much of it herself, by a well-contrived plan.

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HAD-BEENS AND ARE-NOWS.

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There was only one room back of the shop, a good-sized kitchen. But, used to contrivance, the widow, by means of a suspended curtain across the large shop, had quite a decent bedroom, or parlor, as you please. This enclosure was neatly carpeted with green. On one side stood her bed, with downy pillows and snowy spread, a large arm-chair, a little table on which lay a few books, a work-box and a medicine-box; and on the other side of the enclosure stood Letty's piano, a book-case well-stocked, and a black hair lounge. Midway between the space left where the curtain looped back, and the kitchen door, usually stood a rocking-chair, and the walls were covered with pictures, a looking-glass hanging above the table. Here Widow Grafham slept at night—here she received her company by day.

She was not now what she had been once. The years had fallen thick on the dear woman's head, and left their tracks behind—tracks seen in furrowed cheek and wrinkled brow, in dimming

eye and failing step, and scattered, lengthened teeth.

She had been a belle and a beauty once, Widow Grafham had, and traces still were on her of that olden day, in form unusually erect, in soft, long, rippling hair, whose length still swept below her waist, whose brown waves were even now only occasionally broken by slender threads of snow.

There had been poverty and pain in her life. They were not altogether wanting now. But poverty was no longer biting, struggle to-day was not as heretofore, for bread to fill seven little open mouths; for foothold, while she labored, in the busy world, whose thousands trip each other up in their haste to reach life's goal. Twice left to widowhood, there had been hand-to-hand battles just for bread, and yet she often said, with honest pride, "They never went to bed hungry!" Quite true! Whether she ever did or not God knows.

Of the seven children her heart had nourished we have only to do with four in this story, and will therefore dismiss the rest.

One of these four, the eldest, was Gregory Hudworth, our periodical man. A wayward boy he had been, deserting his mother in her hour of need, and filling her heart with the bitterest agony of her bitter life. Eight long years she prayed and watched, watched and prayed. Only the Father knows what weary groanings filled their length, what tears bedewed their passage. But all those tears were bottled up in heaven, those prayers made incense before the throne; their fruitage was the coming home at length, and later still the other, truer coming home.

Next to him was Kiddy Langdon, mother's constant care and anxiety in the days when sparkling eye and dimpled face won many admirers; mother's comfort now, when all things must bow to mother's will and pleasure. She had been named Kidder after a grandmother, and had battled her name as she did her destiny, until one day a new, strange light dawned in her heart, transforming it and her.

She kept a fancy goods store in the village across the bay.

The other two, Becky Cartwright and Letty Sawyer, were children of the widow's second husband, Abel Grafham, and very unlike were they; Becky possessing the intellectual gifts of her father, together with his dark eyes and eager, thirsty, restless temperament, and Letty all the physical charms and graces of her mother. Antipodes were they, but loving ones; and two happier children seldom brighten any home, or take separate paths in life more reluctantly.

Abel Grafham had been largely endowed both physically and intellectually. He united with a tall, commanding form, rare wit and social charms. Alas! his very gifts made him an easy prey to the wine-cup, and who shall measure the bitterness of soul that reached the woman at his side?

She suffered long and patiently, and had she been alone might have remained beside him much longer. But her children? Maternity was big in Mother Grafham's bosom. Theirs was already the misfortune of a drunken parent; must it be also the culture of a drunkard's home? Her

Cartwright and Letty the widow's second and very unlike were the intellectual gifts of dark eyes and eager, and Letty all the of her mother. Answering ones; and two lighten any home, or more reluctantly.

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mother-love developed heretofore unrecognized resources of strength and daring, and with her seven she went forth to meet the world.

But not long did this man, whose love of wife and children continually combated the habits that had driven them forth, continue the unequal struggle. The many-chorded instrument is soon unstrung. His splendid frame lost its manly strength, his sharpened intellect its edge. He died, rum-slain, and left behind — his children's only inheritance — a few yellow, stained letters, written to his wife during her dreary exile. Letters rich with the poetic genius of a great mind, groaning with all the weight of sorrow his heart recognized, pitiful in their revelation of chains riveted on mind and heart, which the might of manhood could not break. O Rum! thousands are thy victims.

Becky was odd and willful, her mother said — perhaps she was the best judge. It is certain she held notions of her own, never quite received by the rest of the family. She was an acknowl-

edged bookworm, the family authority, the end of questioning, generally. Generally, I say, because she was not considered good ecclesiastical authority.

I don't know but I will have to admit that Becky was willful; some said "positive" — what a terrible (?) characteristic that is! — others "strong-minded," and others still dared hint of literary tastes, blue-stockingedness, in short. Yet in spite of all these faults, what rejoicings they always held at her comings home.

I don't know *how* it was — but it really was — that she became the receptacle for all sorts of secrets. When she came on these occasional visits from the distant State to which she had gone with her husband, there was always a sort of family revival, in every sense of the word.

She was at her mother's at the time that my story opens. Had been spending Christmas with her sisters and brothers, and now waited, with her baby boy on her lap, the coming of the hack which was to carry her to the depot, for her husband *expected her home on the morrow!*

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There was no snow on the ground, though it was the last day of December. The miserly Old Year, with unusual tight-fistedness, had persistently refused to clothe himself in fleecy garments and airy feathers, for the appropriation of his coming heir. "Earn what you get," said he, through leaden skies and blustering winds; "I had to make my own way through life. Do the same, young man, do the same!"

But piercing winds and frowning skies had but little apparent effect on a group of lads from twelve to eighteen years of age, who stood on one of Our Street corners, near the Oaks.

"Devil's cubs," a good old minister of our memory used to call street-corner youths, and certainly some of these looked as if the term might not be inappropriate. Merry cubs, however, the younger portion of them seemed to be, as they laughed and hurraed at the antics of a small chap, who, with hands in his pockets, scuffled away for their amusement, after the fashion of the last minstrel troupe.

Hand-clappings and stamps were mingled with loud laughs as one after another tried to mimic his movements, without success; and when a thin little fellow suddenly sprang from their midst, imitating, with great exactness, not only the motions of this hero, but the nasal accent of his "Dinah, lubly Dinah," shout after shout greeted the victor.

"Bully for Hob!" "He's a go!" "Leg it, old man!" "What'll you take for your pina," etc., went round the circle, and the chorus of the song took sudden strength by the addition of a half-dozen young voices.

Apart from the boys, three or four young men stood leaning against the pasture fence, talking earnestly, and apparently unconscious of the close proximity of their youngers, only when some unusual volley of laughter attracted their attention for a moment.

"You're a spooney, Bentley. Catch me giving up the only chance of a frolic, that way! He'll be here soon. I don't see what keeps him; he

should have been here long ago," said a tall, lank youth, with unmistakable signs of tobacco juice about his lips. "Let me alone!" — spitting some of the filthy stuff from his mouth — "I'll settle him! What if the old woman is sick! is that any reason I should give up my fun and go whining? There he is, now. Don't be a chicken, Jim — just keep mum! Hallo, Dick, old fellow, how did *you* happen to turn up just now? This is luck, to be sure, and just as we were planning a jolly time. Scented it, you dog, did you, and followed the trail?" And Sam Jones put out his hand in greeting to the cherry-cheeked lad who turned the corner, with a surprise well-feigned considering he had waited there the last half hour for that especial purpose.

Dick Perkins was a splendidly built fellow, broad and tall, and as he approached, a flush of pleasure on his ruddy face, he really looked handsome. His black eyes, and curling hair, and white teeth, always preserved him from plainness.

"How are you?" he said, in regular boy-

fashion. "Hallo, Jim! is this you? and Fred? and Jake? What are you up to? Some of your games? I say, don't those small chaps step it well? Try again, Ike; if you beat the other fellow I'll give you a quarter!"

Sam Jones gave the fellows a sly wink at this, which had the effect of making Fred Sikes and Jim Bentley move off to a little distance, while Jake Hollis drew nearer the new-comer.

"I say, Perk, how do you like the old man? Does he give you plenty of winking time, and pay up to the handle?"

"I should think he did! Why, the old fellow came around an hour before time to knock off to-night, and paid us a little for New Year. Good of him, too, for we get our pay every Saturday night, regular."

Another wink at this, and Jake continued:

"Now that's just the thing! you were sent here. You see we poor dogs haven't a dime. Summers got off before I could nab him for a dollar, and we haven't a penny to wet our whistles. I suppose you'll stand treat for luck?"

Dick Perkins' cheek flushed a little deeper, and he did not face his companion.

"It isn't much, you know, Jake," he said, deprecatingly, "and the old lady's sick. Then, too, I did promise myself to get Bry a doll. She's shut up all the time, and has nothing much for playthings."

"O, the dutiful boy!" sneered Jake. "Playthings for his sissy and medicine for his mammy! Dear little fellow! Somebody ought to give him a 'Reward of Merit.'"

There was an ominous flash in Dick's black eyes as he turned them full on the speaker.

"Perhaps you'll get a 'Reward of Merit' yourself! You'd better be careful, Hollis; I'll take none of your slang to-night!" he said, hotly. "Mother's sick, and expects me home, and I'm going! That's the whole of it."

"Always has been sick, to my remembrance," grunted Jake, but another flash from Dick's eye silenced him.

"Come, come! what's the need of you two

fellows fighting, the last day of the old year, after being cronies clear through its length," now interrupted Sam. "You're a jackass, Hollis — worse'n a rascal — to talk in that style. I'm a good mind to knock you down myself. If Mrs. Perkins is sick she can't help it, and it's only proper for Dick to take care of her. But that won't hinder him from taking a social drink with us first. You're too peppery, Perk. There's no need to snap a fellow's head off because he's thirsty without the wherewithal to assuage his thirst. Come; I'm good for it — if you need your money at home don't spend a cent of it; but let's go to Jenks, all the same, and get something warm. Nothing strong, you know" — with a wink behind Dick's broad shoulders. "Come; let us fellows pledge each other anew to eternal friendship and better manners. To tell you the truth, I've made up my mind, for mother's sake — she's always at me — not to drink a drop after twelve o'clock to-night. But there's no harm in taking a little something now, and promising to help each other turn over a new leaf."

This specious reasoning seemed to please Perkins. He stretched out his hand eagerly.

"You're a good fellow, Jones. I'm about sick of it, anyway. It makes a fellow feel mean to be deceiving his mother—sneaking into bed half-tight. I had made up my mind to quit—but hadn't spunk enough to own right up. But I'm ready to go hand-in-hand with you."

"All right; it's a bargain, then. Come, let's go celebrate," said Jim.

As Dick stopped to pay Ike Hobson the quarter he had earned, the little fellow whispered:

"Don't go, Dick. *Now's* the only time to turn leaves. Sam Jones' leaves never turn because he waits for to-morrow. Come, go home."

Dick hesitated. "She ain't worse, is she?" he asked.

"No," reluctantly, "she said she wasn't."

"Come, come along," just then at Dick's elbow, and Jones slipped his hand through his arm. "The best troupe ever in the city here to-night," Ike heard him say as he led Perkins away, and the child sighed.

"I don't want it," he said slowly, looking at the coin in his hand. "I wouldn't spend it for the world. He won't have any left when they leave him, and little Bry won't have her doll. She didn't know about it, but it's cheating her, just the same. Poor little Bry!" and something like a sob choked the boy's utterance. "I'll buy it myself out of this for Dick, he'll be so glad when it's all over. He don't mean to be bad!"

When Dick Perkins left the drinking-saloon, an hour after, a thin, pale little face was waiting for him at the door. The owner of that face would not have crossed that threshold for the wealth of the Indies. Little Ike Hobson understood the first, the highest principles of temperance.

"Why, Ikey, is this you?" hiccupped Dick as he turned, detained by a slight tug at his coat-tails. "Why, Ikey," steadying himself against Sam Jones, who could carry more whisky than he, "where'd you turn up? Come in and have something warm."

"O, Dick, come home with me, please," plead the boy.

"Catch me at it! I'm going to the play. Come, I'll take you, seeing you step so well. I'm in for the treat, you know." And those so lately beautiful eyes, now red and bleary, tried to wink at Ike.

The child eluded the hand stretched out to grasp him, but he said, bravely:

"Little Bry will miss you, Dick. She'll be so lonely!"

Little Bry! What room was there in Dick Perkins' heart or brain for her just then? Had not strong drink obliterated every holy love, every blessed remembrance, for that hour?

Mighty is thy swa, King Alcohol!

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE MED'CINE.

IT was a large square room in the old tenement house next door to Widow Grafhams. The house had "its front door on the side," as little Bry said, its only entrance being through the narrow yard.

Yes, a large, square room; but low studded and dingy, containing a small cook-stove, with a faded rug before it; a table originally red, now very much the worse for wear, having lost in some battle a part of one leaf and the support of another, which was supplied by a stick of wood; two wooden chairs well-worn, and an old-fashioned rocking-chair, with a cushion in it, which chair

just now, and usually, was occupied by a little girl, a very little girl, with a thin face, and straggling flaxen locks.

The child had blue eyes, but not large or beautiful ones, neither were her lashes long and silken. Her face was prematurely old, and somewhat hilly in its outlines, the eyes and mouth and nose being gathered rather closely together. Then, too, the nose was large, the teeth and mouth protuberant, the chin rather long. Really, the only beauty about the face was its expression, and the smile that hovered about the mouth — *that* was captivating.

But little Bry was beautiful within, for this was little Bry Perkins; and the two crutches beside the rocker explained, somewhat, the transparent hands, the diminutive body, the pallid countenance.

Bry's father had been one of the So-and-so's who frequented Jenkins' saloon. At first as a moderate drinker, which rather diminished his moderate fortune; then as an immoderate drinker,

and an impoverished one, and finally as an old sot and a pauper.

Strange how many old sots that respectable drinking-saloon turned out to die! And he died. But not until he had made his family wretched, and his wife invalid. Then one night his little son forgot to cower in fright behind his mother's dress, baby Bry forgot to hide her little face in mother's bosom, but patted cakes till sleep c'er-took her, and all because a father forgot his way home, and lay down in the frozen streets.

At break of day they found him dead. Sarah Perkins shed tears above his disfigured corpse, and little Dick and Bry were fatherless and fearless. Alas! they never dreamed he left them heritage. One in a perverted appetite, the other a deformed body. God help the drunkard's child!

The little girl was scarcely two years old—then a bright, happy child, her mother's chief comfort; and so it happened that the sickly woman began to call her "medicine." "My little Medicine," that is the way she said it, and no name was so pleasant to the child.

Sometimes the mother changed the title to Bryony. "That's the only pretty name I know that belongs to medicine," she said. "Our old family doctor used to call some remedy by that name. Surely you deserve it, my little Medicine. I forget aches and cares alike in your soft little touches."

So Bry got her name.

But the little child, whose nimble feet pattered such music in her mother's ears, soon sickened. A hip disease developed itself, and the little feet were still for many months, then after a while of activity, still again, and now they never touched the ground, and only the thud, thud of her little crutches proclaimed her coming.

But it was painful, always, for Bry to move now, so generally the crutches were silent, and the long hours of pain and weariness were breathed out in her chair, with an occasional rest when Dick carried her in his strong arms.

Yet no one thought of Bry as a sufferer. That is, not after they had known her a little. One

forgot that it must be hard for her to be confined, to miss the sports so dear to childish hearts. Perhaps this was because she always smiled. If a spasm of uncontrollable pain marred her features for a moment, it was followed by such a shower of smiles as quite effaced it from your memory.

Dear little Bry! When Ike one day exclaimed at this, and asked her why she always smiled after pain, she said:

"O, it's to make 'em forget. It isn't comfortable, you know, to walk, and have good things yourself, if you feel somebody else hasn't 'em. I always ask Jesus to send the pain when there's no company; but if he happens to forget, I know it's 'cause he's got some one else worser to 'tend to, and I just smile as hard as I can when it's over."

But this afternoon Bry's rocker was drawn as close as possible to the old-fashioned, four-posted bedstead that stood in one corner of the room, and her placid face smiled on the pallid mother-face just opposite, with its half-closed, misty eyes.

At the foot of the bed stood pretty Letty Saw-

yer, her shining hair about her shoulders, her large eyes full of tears, her lips trembling with the fears that were making her heart throb.

"Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Perkins? Can mother? Is there anything you would like? a little gruel, or—" but the sick woman's voice interrupted her.

"No, dear. Nothing unless"—she hesitated, then added slowly—"unless you will pray with me."

Letty's pretty face flushed.

"Wouldn't you like a minister?" she asked, timidly. "I will go for one at once. Mr. Timothy, our minister, is such a good man!"

"Yes, dear, I know. But there's no need. A stranger would only disturb me. It's all right with me and Heaven, but I thought I would like to hear the voice of prayer again."

Letty's heart was questioning her, but she dared not listen to it. Kneel so close beside that dying woman! Every nerve was already thrilling with that strange dread of death, her birthright.

"Becky has not gone yet," she said. "It will be a half hour before the hack arrives for her. She will come, I know. I'll send her right in." And she sped across the yard as if a legion of death-angels followed close behind.

"It's so comfortable to be Letty," said little Bry, quaintly, as the door closed behind the bright vision. "Just like a picture, or the sunshine in the morning. She's *so* comfortable!"

Little Bry was not talking to her mother, and did not mind it that no one answered her. She had quite got used to talking to herself, in the lonely hours she spent while her mother helped the neighbors to wash or sew, and had a fashion, too, of answering herself.

"I s'pose some folks are comfortable one way and some another. I'm comfortable when mother's tired and needs med'cine, and then it's nice to be me!"

"Comfortable"! This was the word that covered every deficiency in little Bry's vocabulary. It was one of the things that drifted early into her

life—one of the comfortable things where comforts were few.

Our plain little Bry had been much disposed in early life to be a vain little Bry. A clean face and pinafore were wont to be smoothed by little hands, while a little miss tip-toed before the small, cracked mirror.

"Is pwetty; ain't I pwetty, mamma?" And mamma, to cure the vanity, invariably answered, "Comfortable, dear, you're very comfortable."

So the little one adopted the word. Comfortable was quite as good as pretty with her, and came to mean much more in time. Things good, beautiful, grand, were all classed thus. Thoughts and feelings otherwise inexpressible, in it found utterance. It garnished and glorified her life, making its plain stretches beautiful, its pangs bearable. Every life has some spring of beauty. Bry Perkins' was in that word comfortable.

The bright vision at the bed-foot had hardly vanished ere a soberer one replaced it. A kiss upon the child's wan face, a gentle hand upon

the sick woman's brow, the repetition, in a tone which gave a sweet, strong flavor to those old-time words, "' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'" "' While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.'" "' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;'" and Becky bowed beside the bed to pray.

It was so glad a thing to go to Jesus, so sure a thing to this worn soul! Smiles chased tears over little Bry's face, the dying woman caught premature glimpses of glory, the kneeler's soul thrilled and quivered with the electric sparks called down. Becky Cartwright was used to holding intercourse with Heaven.

There was a radiant smile upon the sick woman's face as Becky lifted hers.

"You make it a glad thing to die," she said.

"I'm never sad because I'm going home," replied Becky, simply. "O, Mrs. Perkins, I congratulate you!" a thrill of rapture in her voice. "It is and must be still for awhile to me, 'through a glass darkly.' Yours, O, how shortly! 'face to face.'"

"Yes—but—" a shadow flitted across the woman's face as her eyes rested on Bry.

Becky caught the meaning of that look.

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.' O, Mrs. Perkins, we have a *God!*"

The dying woman closed her eyes and smiled, and quiet settled on the circle. The ticking of the old clock on the mantel-shelf was distinctly heard in the silence that followed. Then Becky spoke again:

"I must go now. Would you like some one to sit with you, Mrs. Perkins? Mother? or Letty? or one of the neighbors?"

"O, no!" the smile still lingering about the

woman's face. "I have no pain—am much more comfortable than for days past. Bry knows how to get all I need. Then Dick will be here soon, and I want to talk with him alone."

For the second time that night warm lips pressed little Bry's pale cheek, soft hands lingered about the woman's face. "Good-night, Mrs. Perkins. I will meet you again ere very long;" and the door closed as little Bry gave a long breath of satisfaction.

"'Shall' and 'know' are such comfortable words," she said. "They're big and strong, and Becky says them so often."

Little Bry had guessed the secret of Becky Cartwright's helpfulness. There were no guesses, no peradventures to her religion. It was always, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

The hack was waiting when Becky reached the shop.

"Is she worse?" Mrs. Grafham asked, as she

came in, and Becky answered, with a smile, "No, she's better."

Widow Grafham was used to Becky's "double-talk" as she called it, so she questioned in a quick, fearful tone, "She isn't dead, is she?"

"No; such as she cannot die," was the reply. Then, catching a glimpse of her mother's face: "She says she is more comfortable than she has been for days; and would rather be alone, as she expects Dick soon, and wishes to talk with him."

"Well, perhaps it's as well," said Mrs. Grafham, "seeing it's New Year's Eve. I'll run in before bed-time."

An hour later Ike came in, with a quarter to buy a doll, "with pink cheeks and truly hair."

"I guess Beulah's going to have a New Year's present," said the widow, as the boy stood picking for the prettiest.

"No; it's Dick's money, and the doll's for Bry," was the answer, and the widow felt relieved. Then Dick had come home.

"Bryony," said the sick woman, feebly, "Bryony, are you here?"

"Yes, mother, don't you see me?"

"No. What makes you so quiet, child?"

"I thought p'raps they had come, you looked so comfortable; and I didn't want to disturb you if they were talking to you."

"Who has come? Who's talking? Dick?" asked the sick woman, eagerly.

"No, mother; don't you know? The angels you telled about. Will they be here soon?"

"Yes, pretty soon. Soon enough for you, poor child."

"Mother, will you tell me what they say to you?" and the child leaned eagerly over the bed, and fondled one thin hand.

"I can't, Bry. None can know what they say till they hear them themselves."

"O!" a little surprised ejaculation. "But I'll see them, mother?"

"No, Bry, you won't see them. Eyes that see things here can't see them. Nobody sees them till they die."

"O!" again. "How will I know when they've come?"

The woman lifted one feeble hand, and smoothed the little cheek so near her.

"You'll know, little Bry, because—because—" she spoke slowly; "I can't see, or hear, or talk with you any more."

The blue eyes were wide-spread in amazement.

"Won't you ever talk any more, mother?"

"Yes, in heaven."

"Are you going away?"

"Yes, darling."

"Am I going too?"

"No, not now."

"When?"

"When He sends for you."

Then the two were quiet for awhile.

"I wish Dick would come," at length said the woman, uneasily. "I wanted to say some things to him. I'm afraid he'll be too late."

"He'll be here soon, I guess. P'raps he's had one of his ill turns," said the child, innocently. "But somebody'll bring him home if he has. Jesus always sends somebody, don't he? Jesus loves Dick dearly, don't he, mother?"

The woman's flickering faith was revived by the child's.

"Yes, yes, He loves him. That's my hope, my precious little Medicine."

"Mother, I don't see how you can get along without me up there. You'll need med'cine, p'r'aps."

"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away," repeated the woman softly, her hand searching near her pillow for her little worn Bible. "They are never sick there, Bryony. I shall not need even this *best* medicine, but I will leave it for you. When you feel tired, or sick, or sorry, just open it, and read and pray. It will help you live."

"He won't shut me out of heaven all the time 'cause I'm med'cine?" now asked the child fearfully.

"No, no, little Bry. He sent you here to do some good. When it's done then he'll send for you to go there."

"Why don't he send for me now? Nobody'll want me when you're gone. I'm only med'cine, you know."

"Dick, Bryony. Dick needs medicine; and, remember, I leave him to you. You must love him and pray for him. Don't ever give him up, and don't get discouraged. There's nothing too hard for God."

The little girl's face cleared immediately.

"I'll stay and take care of Dick," she said, briskly. "Poor Dick! he'd be very lonesome if he came home and found us both gone. He wouldn't know God sent the angels for us. It's better for me to stay and 'splain it to him, and then he'll know, if ever he can't find me, that it's my time."

The sick woman's lips quivered a little as she kissed Bry's hand, and she turned on her pillow so as partly to conceal her face.

Little Bry settled herself back in her chair with a pleasant smile.

"I'll watch sharp," she said to herself; "p'r'aps I'll see a little bit of wing or somethin'."

It was a long, quiet watch. The woman did not move again, and only an occasional long-drawn sigh told she lived. Even they ceased after a little, and the eyes closed. Then, by-and-by, a smile crept up the marble face.

The little watcher caught that gleam of light. She leaned forward with eager eyes and open mouth. "She's beginnin' to see or hear somethin' comfortable," she whispered to herself, as she bent her ear forward.

But no sound broke the stillness. The little one listened in vain, so presently she drew herself upon the bed, and touched the sleeper's face. The chill surprised her a little, the silence following her repeated, gentle calls of "mother" did not.

"Yes, she's gone," she said, with a little sigh; "but they didn't take all of her. I'm 'most sure she's hearin' 'em, though she looks so."

She touched the closed lids. "I hope she is not blind," she said. "O, no! that'd be sick. I guess the angel touched her eyes, and they see

the other way, like folks over there. I'm glad *she's* gone, only" — she did not cry, and tried to speak bravely, but her lip quivered — "well, when Dick gets over his sick turns, and don't need med'cine, p'r'aps He'll send for me."

Widow Grafham kept her word. She ran in to see how Mrs. Perkins did before she went to bed. But it was late, and no one answered her rap. She tried the door. It was unfastened, so she peeped in. There was no light but that which fell through the windows. She could distinguish by that the outlines of two forms upon the bed, and heard regular breathing.

"They are sleeping quietly," she reported to Letty, thereby purchasing for her daughter the sleep that must have been forfeited had she guessed the truth.

CHAPTER IV.

BEEFSTEAK, BABIES AND DAILY BREAD.

WHEN Ike Hobson left Widow Grafham's shop, he unbuttoned his old jacket, and with almost motherly tenderness folded the waxen baby to his bosom.

Buttoning his jacket again he crossed the yard to the house where Mrs. Perkins lay. Tip-toeing past her door he crept up-stairs, fearful lest little Bry should know his step and wonder at his neglect to give her his usual "good-night," yet fearing still more, if he did, her questionings of Dick.

Ike and his two sisters were the offspring of poor but godly parents. His feeble mother had

depended largely on her mother's care of her children even while she lived, and dying left them to her charge. Within a year Mr. Hobson, also, had passed away, and Granny Thorpe was left in her old age with three little mouths to fill, three little souls to nurture.

"Her children," she called them, and truly her arms had been first to cradle them, her voice first to consecrate them to God. She had named them, and Bible names they surely were; Isaac Paul, Hephzibah and Beulah. Dear, pious old soul! Quaint and uncultured, was the world's verdict; polished, and fit for the Master's use, was Heaven's.

There was an austerity to Granny Thorpe's religion, however, which bred fear somewhat in Isaac's heart as he crept up-stairs; a fear that made it natural for him to wish to hide the waxen doll from sight.

It was a four tenement house, and Granny Thorpe's was the large room up-stairs on the other side of the house from Mrs. Perkins. The room

right over Mrs. Perkins' was occupied by a Mrs. Blake and her one little girl, an Irish Catholic, whom an English Protestant had first married and then deserted.

As the little boy opened the door of his grandmother's room, its cleanliness and order were very striking. The floor was scrubbed so white, the curtains were so fresh, and the large, four-posted bed in the corner looked so high and inviting. There was a fire on the hearth, a good old-fashioned fire, that sent flickers of light across two young faces nestled amid the bed-clothes.

There were two chairs and two stools, all of them as white as the floor; and the table, with its brass candlestick and sputtering candle, was quite as white as these; yet none of them could compare with the snowy locks just peeping out from the snowy border of Granny Thorpe's cap, as she sat, spectacles on, mending a rent in an old dress.

There was a sudden stop in her work as the door opened, an adjusting of the spectacles, a stretching out across the table, and, as if all these

things did not quite help her to see perfectly she queried:

"Is that you, Isaac?"

"Yes, granny." It tries to be a cheerful voice.

"How's the little one and her mother to-night?" and granny resumes her work as she questions.

"I don't know. I haven't been in," slowly.

"Haint ben in to Bry'ny's? Where hev you ben, then? Now, Isaac, I hope you haint ben 'companyin' round with enny of them bad boys. You know I don't allow it. You hev'n't ben inter evil?"

"No, granny, I haven't. I wasn't doing any mischief. I was only looking 'round."

"Lookin' 'round evil is next-door-neighbor to droppin' in, and most gin'rally leads to it. I don't want you squintin' and peepin' 'round the devil; he'll gobble you up if you do, in spite of your old granny. The first step to evil is hankerin' arter it. Stay to hum nights, and read your Bible—that's better. But there, there! don't feel so

bad! I ain't scoldin'. I know you're purty good — but purty good isn't enough! It won't 'deliver us from evil', it takes God's grace to do that. Your potato's in the bake kettle, 'side the coals, and a slice of bread. I thought I'd keep it warm."

Ike drew a stool close to the hearth, and sat down with his back to his grandmother. He poked his fingers between his jacket buttons till he felt the waxen face, and sighed, relieved that it had not vanished. He ate his potato and bread as if it tasted good, and took a second peep into the bake-kettle, as if another dose would not be altogether ungrateful; but all this time he was thinking briskly.

"I'm not deceiving granny, 'cause I don't mean to. It's Dick's secret, and it would be mean to tell it; but I wish I hadn't gone over to the Oaks. I knew they'd be waiting for him, and I thought I could get him home; but I couldn't, and it *would* make her feel bad if she knew I danced with them. I wish I hadn't gone. Then I couldn't

tell Bry anything if she did ask, and I might have helped make her forget and be happy. O dear! but then — I didn't know."

Just then Mrs. Thorpe's voice disturbed his cogitations.

"Jetty was in to see if you'd help her on her 'rithmetic."

Ike scowled.

"O, I don't want to. I'm tired. She's always wanting help."

"And Isaac Hobson never wants enny help, and Jesus never gits tired of helpin' him, and it was very easy and nice to die for him."

Granny wasn't half through before Ike was on his feet, hat in hand. To see duty, with him, was generally to do it. Granny's face shone. She was proud of her boy. But ere he reached the door she asked, suddenly, "Did you see anything of Dick, Isaac? Was he paid off to-night, do you know?"

Ike's face was crimsoning.

"Yes, granny, he's paid off, I guess — I know

—'cause — cause" — strange he hit the exact thing he wished to cover — "'cause he said he was going to get Bry a doll."

"Doll!" said the old lady, contemptuously. "Doll! He'd better git her a little beefsteak!"

Poor, guilty Ike! Surely he felt that little waxen thing under his jacket start. Was it all the throbbing of his own heart, or did that tiny thing possess dormant life, roused suddenly to action? He betook himself to the entry, while his breath came fast.

"Beefsteak!" he whispered; "beefsteak! Why, it would all be eaten up, and that would be the end of it; but this — O, I knew she wouldn't understand — perhaps 'cause it's so many years since she was little."

It was only a few steps across the hall, but it took Ike quite a while to get over them. He stepped back once to his own door, to tell his grandmother not to sit up if she was tired, for "p'r'aps Jetty had lots to be done, and she wasn't very quick." Then he slowly crossed the hall, and opened a door cautiously.

The room was both like and unlike the one he had just left. Like it in size and papering, unlike it, indeed, in a lack of every comfort, in its utter destitution and uncleanness.

Before the hearth, on an old rug, a girl's form reclined, one arm under her head, in careless gracefulness. She did not move when the door opened, or speak when Ike pronounced her name; yet that she was not sleeping was evident, since her black eyes sparkled and glinted under the firelight.

"Jetty, are you alone?" again said the boy, and now she answered, saucily:

"Yes. The old lady's off celebratin' the New Year in whisky, I s'pose. Needn't be scared, anyway, sonny; I wouldn't let her hurt a dear little fellow like you."

"I'm not afraid of her!" said the boy, indignantly. "You ought to know that! I've saved *you* from her often enough. But I knew it wasn't any use to try to study if she was here."

"You're speakin' of my mother, sir!" As Jetty

Blake lifted her head, one saw, even by such dim light, that she would have been beautiful if — she had been. The black eyes were very brilliant, the brows dark and arched, the black hair very glossy, the mouth full, the nose perfectly formed. Yet no one ever dreamed of calling her even pretty. The whole face bore such a forlorn, discontented, care-for-naught aspect, that beauty could not have recognized it as her work.

When she said, "You're speakin' of my mother, sir!" she meant to be very dignified; instead of which she was intensely silly, and Ike laughed while he said, "But I only spoke the truth, Jetty, and you know it."

Miss Jetty saw fit not to answer this, but demanded, rather suddenly: "What do you want in here, sir?"

"Why, Jet! Didn't you come in after me to help you with your examples? Granny said so, and that's why I came."

"O, the good little boy! the dear little boy! He's an obedient little fellow, ain't he? How his

grandmother does crow about him, though. *He* never gets tired of helping poor sinners, O no!"

"I'll not help you if you don't stop! I'm sure I didn't want to."

"O! you didn't? Then why is the little fellow here? To please his dear old granny, I s'pose. Don't I wish I was pious! I wonder how I'd become it. It's terrible for such sinners as mother and me to live in the same house with the holy whiners. There's the little saint and big saint down-stairs—if the big one hain't got her wings yet. And the old-hen saint up-stairs, with her two little pious pullets, and her little white rooster! Dear little clean things! It's so hard for them to live so close to a *jetty* sinner, who spits over the bannister into their water-pail, and occasionally helps herself to one of the dear little pullet's shoe-strings when she needs 'one very much herself!'"

All this was said very fast, with various sneers and grimaces, and Ike took his hat to go.

"No you don't, little rooster! I'm too smart for you!" and Jetty, springing to the door,

locked it, laughing uproariously as she put the key in her pocket.

"Poor little fellow! If he flaps his wings very hard and crows loud, p'raps the old-hen saint will hear him — if she isn't too deaf — and come to deliver him — if she can. And she don't allow him to go with black roosters, for fear a little ink from their quills might soil his white feathers. But he's got legs, the dear little fellow, and can't he go it, though!" and suddenly Miss Jetty struck an attitude, and, flinging her hands into imaginary pockets, set up a break-down.

Ike's first feeling was fear lest she had discovered his secret, his next was uncontrollable mirth; and he burst into a hearty laugh. This seemed to please the girl. When she stopped beside him, every vestige of disturbance was driven from her countenance.

"Can't I do it well?" she asked. "I knew I could beat you if I tried. I'd a-mind to when Dick put up the quarter. If it hadn't been you I would. I'm sorry I didn't, now. Why shouldn't I have a doll?"

Ike's face was a study. "O, Jetty, don't tell! Granny will feel so bad, and I only went to get him home."

"Give me the doll and I won't!" she said, coaxingly.

"No, I will not! never!"

"Then I'll tell, or keep you locked up here all night!"

"I don't care if you do! You shan't have it! It's nothing wrong. Granny won't scold. If it's wrong I'd rather she'd know it."

"O! would you? The little white rooster told Widow Grafham a lie!"

"I didn't!"

"You did! I heard you!"

"I know I did not. The doll is for Bryony, and the money belonged to Dick."

"What did you hide it for?"

Ike hesitated. It was hard for him to define, much more explain these finer feelings to another, such another as Jetty Blake.

"I didn't want anyone to see it, because, you

know, it wasn't mine; and I had no right to look at or show off what didn't belong to me. And — and — I didn't want anyone to see it till he did."

"Who?"

"Why, Dick. It's his, you know."

"The money was yours."

"No, it was Dick's for little Bry. You see you can't give away a thing twice, and he gave it once to little Bry's doll. So it was hers, or, rather, the doll's — no, Widow Grafham's, I mean; and the doll was hers when he gave it to her."

Those black, black eyes, how they searched his face; how they brightened as they searched.

"And it ain't from you?"

"No; it's from Dick."

"And she won't know?"

"No, never; unless you tell her. O, please don't, Jetty! it'd take all the good from it."

"Ketch me at it! What d'ye think I am? O, but you *are* good, ain't you? And I don't want the doll! I'd ruther she'd hev it — and — and there!" and Miss Blake put a smacking kiss on Ike's face, emphatically.

She walked to the door then and unlocked it.

"You can go when you're a mind to," she said.

"And you needn't teach me the sums, nuther, if you don't want to, and I'll not be mad."

"I want to stay and help you," he said.

"Why?"

"Because *He* would."

"Who?"

"Jesus."

"O!" prolonged. "They're the same uns I had afore. I couldn't learn 'em. I'm dull; she says so — teacher."

"You wouldn't be if you tried. Dull people don't have bright eyes," said *Ike*; and after that they went to work in earnest.

Ike dreamed that night that *Jetty* gave *Bry's* doll to *Granny Thorpe*, and that it had turned to beefsteak, which she was *frying up for breakfast!*

When *Dick* came home, late that night, he was too much intoxicated to think anything about his mother or sister, too stupid to pull out his bed

from under his mother's. Instead, he threw himself into Bry's chair, and fell asleep.

The gray dawn was creeping into the window when he awoke, a strange sense of dread upon him. His opening eyes met the bed, and the gray light revealed and heightened the ghastliness of the faces there. Something in the sharp outlines of his mother's face—something only associated with death—smote him with great fear; and the longer he gazed the stronger this grew.

He tried to throw the feeling off, to lay it to the effect of Jenkins' poor whisky: "It always serves me so," he said, rising and going to the stove. He worked very quietly, and soon a cheerful fire was sending its warmth through the room; but the bed held a strange fascination for him, and before he was aware he stood beside it again.

"I believe they're both dead!" he groaned, stooping and touching Bry's face.

The touch, light as it was, roused the sleeper, and she opened her eyes.

"O, Dicky boy! is it you?" she chirped. "I'm

glad you've come! I thought you must have had an ill turn!"

But Dick's eyes wandered uneasily to his mother's face.

"Has she been worse?" he asked huskily.

"O, no. But"—a shadow creeping over the child's face—"she's gone. They came for her—the angels; but they left some of her for you to see."

The lad groaned; and, sitting down, hid his face in his hands. His little sister crept to the edge of the bed, and placed a hand on his bowed head. He lifted himself then, and took her in his arms.

"O, little Bry!" he sobbed. "If I'd only come home! Now she'll never speak to me, or say she forgives me."

"But she does, just the same. And she left me, you know. You're glad I didn't go, too, Dicky, ain't you?"

"Glad!" he hugged her tightly. "I'd have died myself if you had gone, Bryony."

"There!" she said, triumphantly. "You see He *did* know best. I wanted to go, at first, but mother said it wasn't time for me yet. And God loves you, Dick, and I'm always going to take care of you, and not get 'scouraged."

Poor Dick groaned afresh at this. "The money's all spent, Bry," he said.

"But you're not sick, Dick, and you can earn some more, can't you?" she answered.

"Yes, bless you! so I can, little Medicine," he said, kissing her.

"Yes. I'm your med'cine now; that's what I stayed for."

"And I," said Dick, solemnly, "I will be your Daily Bread, God helping me!"

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CHAPTER V.

HAPPENINGS.

"O DEAR! the world's full of happenin's, and a body never knows when they'll be plunged right inter one of 'em!" groaned Nurse Adams, of Our Street, as she added a spoonful of cream to her cup of oolong that very morning. "Just to think on it! That poor little creetur all alone with the dead! It's awful! My nerves is all unstrung; but then, I must git over, and help a leetle. Poor Bry'ny! I s'pose she'll hev' to take to the poor-house, now."

Nurse did "git over"; but "poor Bry'ny" was taking breakfast with Hephzibah and Beulah by

that time, and Mrs. Grafham and Granny Thorpe were laying out the dead.

Garrulous old Nurse Adams got little out of these women to increase her stock of news.

"Yes, Dick was here when she went," Widow Grafham affirmed, "for he sent in after a doll for Bry quite early in the evening. Poor thing! she went off very peacefully! Bryony says she did not speak or groan — only smiled."

There was a good deal said that day as to how the child should be disposed of; but the women did not agree with Nurse Adams in sending her to the poor-house. Granny very decidedly opposed the poor-house. Widow Grafham thought its inhabitants better off than many of the poor about them, but said: "If Dick wishes to support his sister, it will be better for him, and not so lonely for her. He can easily pay his rent," she continued, "and as to her bite, few of us would miss it."

Of course, in all this, not a word had been said to Bryony, but Nurse Adams made bold to mention it to her before the day ended.

"Is Dick going?" asked the child, innocently.
"No. They'd not keep a strong, likely feller like him hangin' 'round."

"O, well, I go where he does. I'm his med'cine, you know. He couldn't get along without me."

"That won't feed you," persisted Nurse Adams.
"Better look out for your daily bread."

"Dick's my Daily Bread," said Bry, simply.

"Dick! humph! hope you won't lack it when most needed. A broken reed is Dick Perkins to depend on. What'll you do when he's spreein' 'round?"

The child's face was full of earnest questioning.
"Do you mean his ill turns?" she asked, innocently. "They don't last very long, but that's just the reason I couldn't leave him, or mother would have taken me with her. I'm his med'cine, and God will help me cure him. Mother said He could do anything."

There was something in that child which made it impossible for even Nurse Adams to undeceive her as to Dick's habits, so she said no more.

The room where his mother died was haunted with terrible memories for Dick Perkins, so he rented two rooms across the street; or, rather, a good-sized room and a large closet which would hold his bed. The tenement was on the ground floor, next to Hudworth's; and though it was a severe trial to little Bry to leave this loved room, she made no objection, and they were soon moved over.

Great had been Letty Sawyer's indignation that anyone should think of sending little Bry to the poor-house.

"I won't see her suffer," she said; "and I was thinking, mother, that my old brown dress would make her quite a respectable one. I'm going to ask Ellice Mason to help me make it up;" and she did.

Ellice Mason was our dressmaker, and had rooms just the other side of Dick's new home, up over Hudworth's. She readily consented to make the dress; and truly Bry's eyes shone with delight when, arrayed in her new garment, she surveyed her new home.

New, in more senses than one; for Widow Grahams had found a better table, that she could spare, Kiddy Langdon two nice rugs, and calico from the shop had covered the rocking-chair anew, and furnished a coverlid for the bed.

"To think!" said Bry. "And the sun does come in that window a little while every day he's out, and it is comfortable."

It was a little lonely at first, but not as bad as it would have been but for that marvellous waxen baby, for which she made countless garments out of bits of cloth furnished by Ellice and the Grahams. Then one window nearly faced the widow's shop; that was pleasant, for she could watch the comers and goers when weary of everything else.

The New Year, as if taking the advice of his predecessor, had really begun in earnest for himself, and the snow lay in great banks beside the walks. Ike would have been a millionaire, surely, if all the shovelfuls of snow he tossed that first week in January had been gold.

He visited Bryony as often as possible. Snow

made his business driving for a while, the same snow that housed his sisters because of lack of sound shoes.

"I shovelled snow for Dr. Fosby this morning," said Ike one evening, with all the dignity one might suppose would attach to that office.

"Did you?" admiringly. Ike was always a hero to her. "What does he look like? Is he tall and splendid, Ike?"

"Yes, he is; but it wasn't him that paid me. It was the man. I've seen him often, though; he drives past here sometimes."

"I wish I could see him. I'd like to ask him about Bryony. You know mother only *thought* it was one of the names used by *her* doctor for med'cine. It must be nice to have a doctor of your own. Mother had, once."

"I tell you what it is, Bry, I'll ask him, if you want to know very much," said Ike, bravely, though not without inward quakings at the thought of the temerity of approaching the great man.

"Will you, Ikey?" admiringly. "What a dear, good, comfortable Ike you are. It would be nice, you know, to be *sure* I'm med'cine."

So when Dr. Fosby came down his steps next morning a small urchin waylaid him.

"What now?" he asked, whimsically, stopping short. "Didn't Ned pay you, you rascal?"

"Yes, sir; but — if you please, sir, I'd like to ask you a question, if you've got time."

"Got time! I've got all there is; but suppose I haven't and don't please? Out with it, you young monkey. What are you staring at?"

"Please, sir, is Bryony med'cine? She'd like to know."

"What she? Bryony?"

"Yes, sir."

The doctor was quite taken aback by this unexpected answer, yet he said, jocosely, "What is she? plant or jalop?"

"She's Bryony Ferkins; and she's lame, and would like to know if she's truly med'cine."

"Well, that depends; how does she look?" said the doctor, a twinkle in his blue eye.

"She's pale and thin, and not very pretty; but she's as good and sweet as — as sugar."

"She homeopathic, you young dog. Zounds! to insult a man before his own premises! Sweet, is she? sweet! I wouldn't give it to a cat. Come! what's the matter with you now?" drawing on his riding gloves. "I'm a good mind to make medicine out of you, or — a doctor. What do you say to that? hey, sir? Would you like to come and study medicine with me, and get all the homeopath shaken out of you?"

Two very bright eyes looked up to the big man's, inquiringly:

"Do you mean it, sir?"

"Mean it! What next, you jackanapes? Hint that *I* ever say what I don't mean! Of course I mean it!" The doctor stepped into his sleigh and took his reins.

He saw the lad put one hand up over his mouth quickly.

"Corking up? afraid of running over? is that it?" he said, laughing. "I haven't struck you

dumb, have I? Come, I thought these was great talk, a while since, of my precious time, you humbug!"

"I didn't want to speak too quick. You're very, very good! I thank you, sir; but—but—there's granny, and Hepzy, and Beul, and—I guess I can't, yet, sir, not until I get more money."

What a ringing, hearty laugh Dr. Fosby's was! "You're sensible, if you are small potatoes. A wonder some of the rest of us didn't think of it. It's a deal easier to bring money into this business than to get it out of it. Well, remember, young man, I'm ready when you are. Good-morning. O, by-the-by, tell Bryony she's just the right sort when administered properly;" and the sleigh disappeared.

But, not many days after, the eccentric old physician made his way into Bry's territory. He introduced himself, and smiled at the rounding out of her eyes at the appearance of a real doctor.

"This is little Bryony, the little med'cine?" he said, quizzically.

"Yes, sir; and I'm so glad you came. I never saw a truly doctor before. You are very kind to take the time. It must be very comfortable to be a doctor; you just live to make folks well, don't you, sir?"

"That is rather close questioning," replied the doctor, almost soberly. "But what is the difference between us, Bryony? You are medicine, and medicine is for sick folks, is it not?"

"Yes, sir; but it's different. Doctors *could* be somethin' else, you know; and it's just — just good and nice and grand and comfortable of 'em to give 'emselves up for that. It's kind of like Jesus. He lived and died to make folks well inside. But med'cine is nothing but med'cine; it wouldn't be good for anything else."

Little Bry was striking bottom principles; and, somehow, as was her wont, she struck her listener's heart. He spent a half hour with her — the busy man, with scarce a minute to spare; and coaxed her into speaking freely on the subject she always avoided, herself and her pain. He left a

glass and spoon beside her when he went. He thought he could help her.

"You've been excellent medicine for the big doctor," he said, as he rose to go, tears in his blue eyes. "He'll come again when he needs another dose."

Winter drags along slowly to the poor. Many, on Our Street, felt hunger's occasional bitings. Dick, for a while, was very steady; and little Bry did not want life's necessities. Granny Thorpe and her little brood were pinched; but Widow Grafham, with her sympathy born of the bitter past, helped smooth it for all.

Of course Widow Grafham felt the hard times as did other dealers, but they never froze her heart-blood, or knotted her purse-strings. She always had a dollar for some one poorer than herself, as well as a cup of tea and a kind word; as to her weekly pudding, it was an established fact.

Once every week Widow Grafham's large bread pudding, yellow with custard, speckled with

raisins, found its way to some home. Bry often got a little one, or a slice off the big one, before it was sent to Granny Thorpe's, or elsewhere. It went where it was supposed to be most needed.

It was a beautiful afternoon, bright and sunny; but neither the white snow or shining sun could satisfy little Beulah Hobson, for she wanted an apple. Granny had given her and Hepzy permission to go over to Bryony's for a little while; but the sight of little Teddy Sawyer at Widow Graham's shop window, with an apple in his hand, had taken all the enjoyment of the occasion from Beulah; and instead of going into Bry's with her sister, she went to Hudworth's window, devouring the apples and oranges there displayed as truly and as greedily as one can without getting his teeth into them.

"O dear!" she said at last, when the cold compelled her to leave the charmed spot for a seat beside Bryony and her sister. "O, dear! I'm so hungry for apples; and I've only had one this winter, and they smell so nice."

"Where did you smell them?" asked Bry, passionately.

"At Hudworth's. O, such big, red fellows in the windows, big as my two fists."

"But you couldn't eat 'em through the window," said matter-of-fact Hepzy.

"Yes, I did. I looked and looked till I smelled 'em, and then I looked and looked till I tasted 'em, and they were so nice."

"O, what a lie!" said Hepzy. "I'll tell granny."

"No, 'tain't a lie," said Bry, who quite understood the feeling. "She's 'maged it, and it's just like truly. I wish I had an apple—I'd give it to her."

But she hadn't. And though she did all she could to make her little company forget, it was quite useless. The wax dolly, competent to any task expected of her heretofore—was not able to combat these longings. Bry racked her little brain in vain for some expedient, then suddenly her face brightened beneath a new thought.

"Let's play party," she said. "You and Hepzy go out and pick up all the bits of apples and cores before Hudworth's door, and then we'll put 'em in the fire, and make believe it's truly apples baking, you know."

Hepzy could not see the good of this.

"She'll only feel worse 'cause she'll want to eat 'em;" she said. "She smelled 'em at Hudworth's, and that didn't do any good."

"'Cause it wasn't a truly smell," said Bry. "A truly smell goes right in, you see. We smell roses, but we don't want to eat them."

Beulah was convinced by this reasoning, Hepzy silenced.

The cores were soon gathered. Dirty, frozen things they were, but patiently the children thawed and washed them, then laid them on the red-hot coals. Soon the sweet smell filled the room.

"It's time to go to the party now, Angy," said Bry to Beulah's old rag doll (they had exchanged babies for the afternoon). "I smell Mrs. Beulah's

apples a-baking. Supper must be just about ready."

Beulah smiled. She was imaginative enough to take delight in this. Even Hepzy found some consolation. "Folks that go by'll think we're having 'em," she said.

"Yes; and that'll make them comfortable," added Bry. The thought that anyone could be uncomfortable because some one else enjoyed what they could not have, had never, even remotely, entered her conception.

Quite a little while after the girls went home, Bry sat very still, her face sober. She was thinking, and at last thought out loud, as usual.

"I haven't anything that I could buy one with, unless I gave up dolly. I — could — do — that!" slowly. "But Dick gave it to me, and it wouldn't be right. Then it might make her feel bad to b'long to some one else, 'cause she's deaf and dumb, and I couldn't make h'r understand. But if Beul only could have an apple!" Then, suddenly: "O, yes, I know. My med'cine said this

OUR STREET.

morning, 'Ask anything in my name.' That's Jesus' name. Please, dear God, just send a few apples. Please, *one* will do. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

A half hour after, Dr. Fosby's black Pete opened Bry's door, after a little rap.

"For de little Miss Bry'ny, wid de comp'ments of de doctor," he said, bowing a great basket into the room, and leaving it.

The little girl sat with both eyes stretched very wide open.

"I know it's them! He always does just what He says. Jesus is *so* comfortable!"

Then she slid from her chair, crept to the basket, and peeped in.

Even she was not prepared for such a display. A dozen jelly tarts, blushing with beauty, a nice, white loaf of bread, a chicken, and — a full peck of apples.

"O! O! it's too comfortable!" said little Bry, and she cried.

An hour after, Ike, entering, found a strong

flavor of baking apples. It had cost Bry a lot of aches, but she had done it, and the oven door was opened for his inspection.

"Go right over and get them both! I'm going to have a truly party," she said. And it was "*truly*."



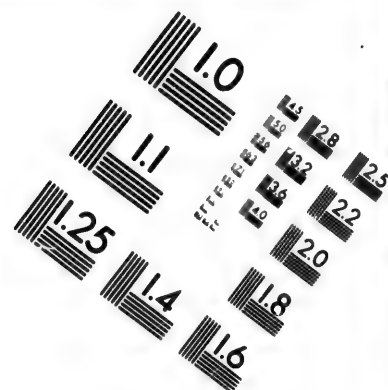
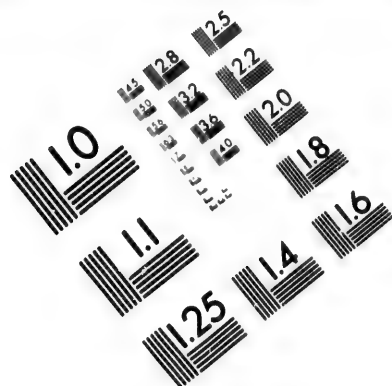
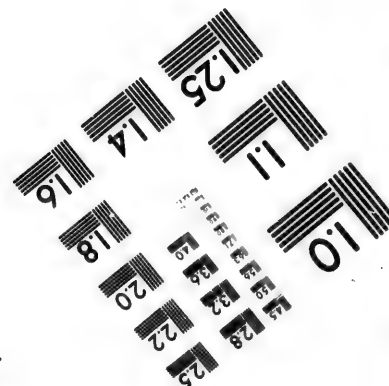
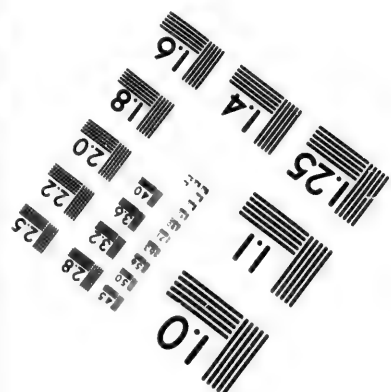
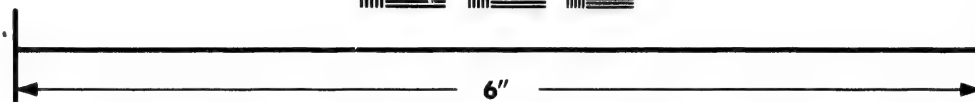
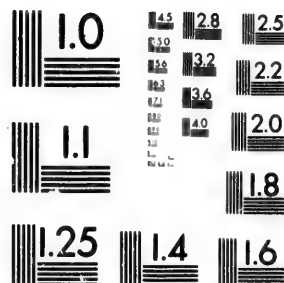


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CHAPTER VI.

LITTLE STEVIE.

WINTER does not last forever. The sun, after numberless apparently fruitless attempts to break his icy chains, at last succeeded, and the earth walked forth from captivity, love-emancipated, and gave utterance to her joy in opening leaf and budding flower, in singing bird and praiseful man.

What human heart responds not to spring's glad summons to awake? nature's prefiguring of resurrection life and joy. Who has not felt like little Bry Perkins, as she leaned from her window one April morning, with a sigh of satisfaction, saying:

"I would come out, pretty sunshine! I would if I could. I'm lame, but I thank you just the same for asking me."

The spring had brought a wonderful treasure to our little friend. A baby! A really, truly baby, belonging to the young couple who lived up-stairs, Edward and Mary Parker.

When Dick first told his little sister the news she cried for very joy.

"Just to think, Dick, that God should send a truly baby, like the little Jesus, right into our house, Dick!" she sobbed. "O, isn't 'Our Father' comfortable!"

The baby was not a week old when, yielding to his sister's importunity, Dick carried her up-stairs one evening, and waited while Nurse Adams brought the little, red-faced morsel out for inspection.

Bry took one long, long look, touched one little hand, kissed the velvety cheek, and then was content for two more weeks.

Nurse Adams had gone by that time, and Bry

did not tell Dick what she premeditated. But after he was gone to work, and Mr. Parker safely out of the house, then she clambered slowly and painfully, on her hands and knees, up over the stairs, and knocked at the door.

What a delightful time she had! The young mother let her see the tiny feet, and the baby opened his eyes, and, yes — she sat in the great rocker and held him full five minutes.

Then it was, with eyes brimming over with satisfaction that she said: "O, Mrs. Parker, it's so comfortable to have a baby!"

Mrs. Parker laughed, but she felt very much like that herself; and from that minute a strong affection sprang up between them, based on that baby boy.

He was a wonderful child. Bry did not wonder that Letty Sawyer kissed him so enthusiastically; that Widow Grafham pronounced him a splendid fellow; that his old Grandpa Dodge came away in from the country, and looked at him through his spectacles, and held him in his shaky arms, and

laughed and cooed at him as if he was a huge baby himself. O, no! none of these things surprised Bry; the surprise was that all the city, at least, all Our Street, did not flock to see him.

One, two years passed, and the baby grew daily. Dick had gone back to his ill turns. Bry wondered and prayed, and would have sorrowed, perhaps, if it had not been for that wonderful baby. As it was she forgot all things, even occasional hunger pangs, in his society.

He was a real baby, boisterous, crowy, kicky, not a bit too good for the world, yet the very best thing in it. Reckless—as what baby is not?—getting his small legs into everything possible, sticking his small nose into everything forbidden.

A lusty, laughing, crying, roly-poly. A curly-pated, brown-eyed, mischievous tumble-about, who picked at Bry's eyes, stuffed his fingers into her mouth, pulled her hair with as much impunity as if these things had been made solely for his benefit, and viewed his mother much in the light of a

police officer, meddling with his personal rights, when she interfered in the least.

It so happened that Bryony gave him his name.

"What will you call him?" she said one day to Mary Parker, while yet the child was young. "Something from the Bible? I think Stephen would be nice, 'cause his little face shines 'most like his did when they killed him."

"O dear!" said the mother, quickly. "I don't want to name him after anyone who died."

"But everybody dies," replied Bry. "O, no! Elijah didn't. Would you like Elijah, Mrs. Parker?"

"Bless me! no; that's too old."

"Or Enoch?" still questioningly.

"That's worse than Elijah."

"But they're the only ones that didn't die, Mrs. Parker. I 'spect every name has b'longed to some one who died."

"Perhaps so," Mary said, and it ended there. No, it didn't. Hearing of the conversation, Mr.

Parker was struck very favorably with Bryony's choice.

"That's my brother's name—Stephen," he said. "He's worth a pile of money and has no children. Let's call him that; it may be worth something to him some day."

So the baby was named, and Bry was happy.

It was she who first discovered him trying to catch a sunbeam, and who prayed over his first burn, his little hand held fast in both hers: "Please make it well, dear Jesus, he's such a little fellow, and it hurts."

She taught him first to pucker up his ruby lips for a kiss, and to waft them through the air from his tiny palm. Who was prouder than she when he patted the first cake for his admiring mamma, and what adventurer ever boasted more of his wondrous discoveries than she at the finding of that first tooth? and his first step—ah, little Bry! who else thought of praying that night: "Dear Jesus, you are so good to teach him how to walk; please don't let him ever forget to grow."

But Bry's baby was growing old ; his third year was opening. Long since he had learned to travel over the perilous stairs to reach her, now his favorite place was by her side. He would push a chair up close to her, and climb on her lap, the little lap that sometimes ached so sorely, yet so gladly, from the precious burden it would not have missed for the world.

Mrs. Parker knew how well Bry could be trusted with her darling, and days when she was unusually busy, or wished to go out, Stevie was left to her charge. Then what strange, old-fashioned talks they had together, for Stevie learned early to use his tongue. But none of his sayings pleased Bry like this: "When I det up to papa, I'll be oor granfarder, By."

O, how Bryony would laugh ! yet Master Stevie was wholly in earnest. "Granfarder" was the repositum of untold sweetmeats and toys, and to be Bry's "granfarder" meant to him to be her greatest good.

Occasionally, of an evening, Mr. and Mrs.

Parker went out together. Then the little man shared Bryony's room, and then it was that he took lessons of her in astronomy.

"The stars are the eyes of people who live in heaven," she said, on one such occasion. "Those two over there are my mother's eyes, and they always look just so comfortable. She's been there a long time now, and knows lots of things."

"We'll be next her when we doe, an' we'll be comfittle, By," lisped Stevie.

"O, you mustn't go, Stevie. You're going to be a nice, big man, and tell folks about Jesus. I'll go first."

One night she had a new scientific discovery to relate.

"I've found out what the moon's made out of, Stevie," she said. You know that nice, reddish sort of clay you and me saw going along in the big carts the other day? Well, God made the moon out of that. He made it round like a snow-ball first — using her hands to illustrate — "then he made it flat" — bringing her hands together —

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Mr. and Mrs.

"like a pancake, and stuck it up in the sky with his thumb."*

"Bid Dod!" said the astonished listener.

"Yes, bigger than you can think if you shut your eyes ever so tight, and try real hard," replied Bry. "But then he lives up there just inside the blue, and it's easy for Him to put out one arm and fasten it."

"Did he nail it there?" now queried the scholar.

"O, no! that would spoil it. The nails would show."

"It look as if suffin was fastened to the middle," said the little boy.

"O! that's only a picture God made with his finger. You see, Stevie, that isn't anything to what he's got inside. The moon and stars and sun are nothing but his little lights."

One morning Stevie did not come down to see

*This is true. The idea of a little sister of the author's. Truly a flaxen-haired Bry, who now with angels searches out the truths of creation, and creation's Creator.

Bry — something unusual; and his little, fretful cries reached her strained ears.

"P'raps he's sick," she said. And, by-and-by, unable to still her surmisings longer, she laid her crutches at the foot of the stairs, and crept slowly up.

Mrs. Parker was surprised, on opening the door in answer to a feeble rap, to find Bry's little face looking up from the floor. She helped her in quickly, and went down after her crutches.

"I'm glad you've come!" she said, in a relieved sort of way. "Stevie is so cross. He was fretful enough yesterday, but to-day there's no living with him. I think" — lowering her voice — "he's coming down with the chicken-pox."

So Bryony was soon established in the big rocker, baby Steve beside her. It was wonderful how soon she quieted him with her funny talk. It was all about chickens that don't live in a hen-house, and have no mamma, and can't say "peep! peep!" and don't eat meal or corn, and haven't any feathers or eyes, only little red combs; yet

make babies cry, and run all over their faces, and make their eyes ache, and are very naughty little things.

Mrs. Parker declared to her husband that night that she had never seen such a child as Bryony; and every day thereafter, until baby was quite well, Mr. Parker brought Bry up-stairs before he went to work, and Dick carried her down at night; and she quite learned to say, "Our baby;" "Our Stevie."

No knowing how grimy "our baby" would have become had it not been for our little friend. His little feet and fists and yells fell so fast when his mother began to wash him that she was glad to desist; but Bryony's attempts in the same direction furnished great fun.

The sponge was a little brown colt that didn't know his own stable, and blundered first into one brown eye and then the other, and then across his cheeks and chin, bringing up at the ears.

How excited the little fellow grew over

the business, with what a shout he greeted the colt finally housed in the tin basin!

It was very much the same in combing his hair, only then each separate curl was a little pig, with a funny name, who, in some unaccountable way, got his bristles all twisted up. How anxious "our baby" grew to have them straightened, with what a crow of triumph he recognized his own curly head in the glass to which mother lifted him.

Our little Bry proved herself a general, but her pleasant days with Stevie were interrupted somewhat. Edward Parker was doing well in his business, and felt that he could well afford a larger home. His wife wanted a parlor, but she hated to part with Bryony.

After a while a tenement just suiting them was vacated across the street, and they moved. It was a sore trial to Bry. To be sure it was not far, but it was where his little cry would not reach her ears, where his baby feet could not travel so often, though Mrs. Parker promised

still to bring him over, and to leave him when she wished to go away.

Bry tried to be brave. She said:

"I'm glad, of course I'm glad. He'll have everything nice, now;" still, she did shed a few tears that night, after she was in bed, where nobody would see them.

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CHAPTER VII.

A TRAMP.

FALL weather had come again, and hard times with it. All classes of workmen trembled, and those without trades might well fear.

Granny Thorpe was very feeble, increasingly so; and Ike unsuccessful in finding anything to do. Widow Grafham had got a situation for Hephzibah at the West End, as under nurse, and there were but three to feed now. But dear old granny's needle could not do that, and Ike's usually cheerful face was lengthening perceptibly.

"You see it won't do, Bryony," he said to his little consolation one evening. "It won't do.

Winter is coming on, granny's too old to work, and I ought to be supporting her; but I don't support myself. I can't eat; the food chokes me when I know there's so little, and that costs her so much. When anybody brings her in something nice, and she puts it on the table, I feel like a thief. You would, you know you would, if you were a great boy like me!"

His voice was very shaky, for his heart was very full; and Bry's little, tender, soothing touches did not tend to strengthen it.

"I've tried all over the city. Some say I am big enough to be learning a trade instead of running errands. But wherever I go to try for a chance to learn a trade, it's always the same answer: 'Too hard times to take apprentices; they don't pay.' So what is a fellow to do? I'm 'most sixteen, Bry — think of it! My clothes are getting small — they are already shabby enough — I'll be naked altogether soon."

"If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,

shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" quoted Bry. "That was my med'cine this morning. He always says true, and its comfortable." *and has told*

"Yes," assented Ike, hesitatingly; "but I'm a big boy, big enough to earn it. "I wouldn't like to sponge on God if I could help it."

"But it isn't sponging, Ikey boy. You're his own boy, and He has a right to feed and clothe you. And you've done all you can, and He knows it. O, He's got something for you, something comfortable, I know. It's slow, but it's coming." *and has told*

"But I want it now," said the boy. "Poor old granny! it almost breaks my heart. I could bear it — I'm big and strong — that is, I'm big inside. I feel big enough to do anything! But that's one reason they give for not hiring me on the wharves. 'You're not large and stout enough.' I wish they'd let me try once. But, Bry, I've been thinking I'm a good mind to go outside of the city, to the farmers. It's a poor time of the year, I

know; but if I can earn my board it'll be better for the others."

Little Bry's heart gave a great bound, and stopped. Ike go away! What of the lonely nights when Dick was gone? the many kindnesses of every day? But she shuther mouth resolutely. She must not stand in his way. The first thing she said after a little pause — said with her cheek laid up to his, her arms about his neck, was:

"P'raps that's just the thing. It's nice to be big and able to try, and then you know there is Somebody bigger than all who will help you. I'll ask Him to be sure and send something and He will. He always says 'Yes.' It's so comfortable to have a Jesus!"

"It's so comfortable to have you!" burst out Ike. "I don't believe I could live without you. You are my medicine, sure."

It was settled that night before they separated that he should start next morning. There was a long talk with granny before bedtime, and daylight found him upon his way.

He went out past the Oaks, and walked all day, but without results. He turned back, but not home. He would not impoverish his grandmother; he would walk until he did find employment, he inwardly resolved. So he crossed the bridge and entered Our Village. The night found him cold, hungry, shelterless. He turned into a field, and, coming upon a barn, crept into it, and covered himself with the hay. There, on his bed of straw, he wondered if God had utterly forsaken him, and, still wondering, fell asleep from very weariness.

"June Hargreave, he's hungry! 'most starving. Will you give him some breakfast? Say! will you?"

"Give who some breakfast, Miss Primrose? *He* is hungry; what he?" and Juniper laughed a gay little laugh, as she gazed in her sister's excited face.

"Why, *he*, of course. How do *I* know his name? I didn't stop to inquire name when he's

'most starving, p'r'aps. Say, can he come up? He's down at the gate, and — O dear, say, June, say?"

"Of course he can come. There is small need of anybody starving, and all these buckwheat fritters going to waste. Bring him along."

"Stop, Rose." It was a commanding voice that deterred the child on her dance to the door. "It's only a tramp, June," continued the gentleman, in a less exacting tone, resuming his paper.

"And tramps never get hungry, though gentlemen with bank-stock and real estate are foolish enough to occasionally. Is that it, Popsydil?" The saucy little speaker eyed the tall, dark gentleman very coolly as she asked this question, and with the least bit of attend-to-your-own-affairs-air in her voice.

"Why, yes. I suppose the miserable dogs do get hungry, like their betters; but why don't they work for their bread? That's the question."

"No, Popsydil, you are mistaken. That is not the question," replied Miss June, a little twinkle

in her bright eyes. "The question is whether this particular tramp—as you call him—shall go hungry, or eat up these nice fritters that nobody else will eat." June was just a little aggrieved that her breakfast had not found better appetites.

"June," decidedly, "I cannot feed all the tramps in the country."

"No, sir, I don't suppose you can," demurely. "If you could I couldn't, this morning. But I can and will feed this one. These fritters shall find a consumer. Hurry up, Primrose, or they will be cold before he gets them."

Rose cast a little fearful glance at her father, but the gentleman was apparently busy with his paper, so she darted off.

"June, do you think you set just the right example before your sister, in teaching her to disobey me? I thought that Book you have so recently adopted as your guide said something about children obeying their parents."

Mr. Hargreave's voice denoted no anger, it sel-

dom did in addressing Juniper; it did express a little amused questioning as to how she would get out of the dilemma she had suggested.

"Of course it does." Miss June seated herself on one of the gentleman's knees as she answered. "And it says something, too, about fathers provoking their children to anger, and you're a dreadful provokative, sometimes, Popsydil. I am really afraid" — and Miss June, who had been vibrating back and forth, suddenly gained an equilibrium. "I am really afraid, Popsydil, that you have the root of all evil in you. Money's a very good thing if we don't love it too well, but" — and the little lady's voice grew very grave — "but I really don't know what might happen to this house if I wasn't here to give away a loaf of bread and a few pies occasionally."

The gentleman's eyes were full of repressed merriment as he lifted them to his daughter's face.

"Then I am to understand, Puss, that you are a sort of lightning-rod catching the electric sparks

of divine wrath, and conducting them away from my devoted head?"

"You must not trifle with divine wrath; it is a reality." Such a sober, sober face, such bright, earnest eyes. Miss June was so quiet now one could hardly have supposed her to be the same little bird that was bobbing its brilliant head from side to side of the father-face so recently.

The fond parent patted the bright head, and drew the bright face to his for a kiss.

"She loves to preach at her old father," he said.

"No, it ain't preaching, it's only doing my duty." Two arms went like a flash about his neck, two lips sought his again, two eyes smiled roguishly from out the dimpled face. "He's nothing but a naughty old bear, but I love him!" said the saucy child, balancing herself again on his knee.

Perhaps Mr. Hargreave was not very much to blame for his pride in his eldest born. Few faces were more piquantly lovely, none could make

greater contrast to the almost stern darkness of his own.

She had such a delicious complexion ! The lily and the pink were wonderfully blended and contrasted, and who could count the dimples ? One never knew where the next one would surprise him ! They were like her smiles, multitudinous, and like them, also bewildering.

The cheeks were rounded perfectly, the chin roguishly, the dainty, tinted ears and snowy neck were all her own. Such a comical little I-do-as-I-please nose, such a coaxing, wishful, authoritative mouth, wooing you by its beauty to kiss it, frightening you from your purpose by its do-it-if-you-dare-itiveness !

The head was just a wee bit commanding in its air, inimitable in its poise. Seldom still, always claiming your attention, consuming your attention. A head covered with — what colored hair, shall I say ? Not black, like her father's, not brown, like Aunt Myra's, not drab, like Mrs. Maria's, or goldy, like Rose's, not red, like Betty's, the house-

maid. Bless me, no! not red, and yet somewhere between red and brown. A delicious color, almost like wine "when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." "Look not," said Solomon, of that cup. Well had it been for some ladies could they have helped looking at Juniper Hargreave's hair, for their brown locks never pleased them as well after, and it was generally weeks before they could view them with any degree of complacency. It did not curl, or yet lay still. It danced about as fancy-free as her own heart, as uncontrolled as robin red-breast. Sometimes it could be coaxed to braid or band for an occasion, but it always broke forth in greater freedom after, as if glad of release.

Her eyes were like her hair in color, and partakers of its peculiar beauty. She was young—just fifteen; small, though you did not realize it, untrained, un disciplined. Her mother had died in her infancy, and she had brought up herself, if you believe her own testimony, a fact on which she rather prided herself.

To be sure, Aunt Myra Hargreave had undertaken that difficult task, but she had not succeeded well. Not, however, from want of diligence. She worked with indefatigable determination and zeal, stretching, pruning, preaching, disciplining. But Juniper would not—and her father rather exulted in the fact—persistently would not become a second edition of Aunt Myra. If she had she would not certainly have been anything like her mother, for Edward Hargreave would not have been guilty, even in such a secondary manner, of marrying his maiden sister.

Facts compel me to admit that Miss Juniper triumphed, and Miss Hargreave was driven from the field in high dudgeon. Her anger had been somewhat modified lately, however, by certain concessions made by June, which were wholly the result of the new Christian experience to which her father referred.

After her aunt's departure Juniper had been sole mistress of the situation. To be sure, her father married again, but the step-mother had

little power ; and ere long she was laid beside the first wife, leaving Rose.

Juniper brought up Rose. She was competent, she said — she had learned from Aunt Myra ; and it was amusing to see how she applied the rules to another that she had found so irksome herself. The result was, Miss Rose was somewhat old-maidish, and earned, early in life, the prefix of "Prim" to her original name.

Now there was a third wife in the house. Poor June was in despair when her father first imparted to her the news. That was before her conversion, and she was not angelic. She persistently refused to call the new-comer anything but Mrs. Hargreave ; but this, partly through that lady's grieved manner, partly owing to June's new views, had been modified to Mrs. Maria. The new wife was anything but strong when first married, almost an invalid now, and took on herself but little authority.

This was as well, perhaps. Only one had ever ruled Edward Hargreave since he buried his first

love, and that one was the bright-haired child who resembled her so closely. The face, however stern to others, softened to her; the purse-strings, tied to others, refused not to be loosened at her demands.

He was a wealthy man, a man of considerable culture. A farmer, so styled; but one who did not injure himself by hard work. His estate was large and in good condition, his vegetables always of the best, his apples and fruits among the finest in the market. His home had every comfort, his table every luxury, but his outlays were always for his own. His sympathies seldom went beyond his own home and family, and some of their smaller needs he would have overlooked had it not been for Juniper. She had no scruples at unlocking his treasures, and fearlessly encountered his strong prejudices.

Now as she sat on his knee she exclaimed suddenly:

"Here comes Rose, and her *he*. Now, you precious old Popsydl, please go out of the room

like a good old blue-beard, or the poor fellow won't eat half enough."

Popsydil obediently set the miss on her feet, and prepared to go. He took her by the chin and kissed her first, however.

"You are a most irreverent child," he said. "I don't believe there is another like you in the whole world!"

"Of course there isn't!" leading him to the door; "and it's lucky for you that there isn't. You know you'd break the tenth commandment if there was, and never rest content till you owned her, though like as not it would impoverish you."

As Mr. Hargreave disappeared through one door, Rose and her protegee appeared at the other. The little girl was ahead, but holding firmly by Ike Hobson's jacket, and, as she ushered him into the room, she said to her sister, in a stage-whisper:

"I had to talk and talk to make him come, and he said he wouldn't eat breakfast unless he could work enough to pay for it. I promised—just to

get him here, you know. Of course we don't want him to pay — after he's done it won't make any difference."

"Of course it will make a difference," said June, promptly. "I can't help you to break your word, or to make him feel mean and beggarly. There's wood enough to saw, and he can pay for it; but there's plenty of breakfast first. Take him into the sink-room for a wash."

"Eat all you can," she said to Ike afterwards. "Those fritters are good. I made them myself."

The smell was certainly appetizing. Ike had never inhaled anything so delicious as that steaming coffee, yellow with eggs and cream. He looked up at the bright face. He wished to thank June. But, bless me! he hadn't any tongue after that first glance. "Just like a rainbow," was his description to Bry afterwards.

He did eat, though, and eat heartily enough to please Juniper, who flitted about, not watching him, yet always knowing when his plate needed a fresh supply.

"June! June!" called a feeble voice from the sitting-room.

"Rose, go in and see what Mrs. Maria wants."

"She wants you," reported Rose, a moment after, and with a little shrug of the shoulders June disappeared.

"June, have you got that tramp right into the dining-room?" The shocked voice reached Ike's ears, as well as the young lady's suppressed "Hush! why, he will hear you! He isn't a tramp! he's a boy with a nice face. Yes, he is in the dining-room. Where else should he be to eat breakfast?"

"In the kitchen, where Betty can watch him, and where there is less to lose. He may be just spying out the best way for some rogues to enter the house. He may be even now stealing the teaspoons. Go right out, June, right out. What an imprudent child you are! He must be watched closely."

"You forget I only left him at your call," June retorted, indignantly. "He doesn't need watch-

ing! If he does you must do it—I will not!" going out and shutting the door emphatically.

Ike was sitting, his chair pushed from the table, his face flushed. Luckily, his meal had been nearly finished ere the conversation began; another mouthful now would have choked him. He looked up into the young girl's face, his voice uncontrollable with emotion. He met sympathy.

"You must not mind," she said. "The lady is sick and nervous, and does not know you. She would trust you if she had seen you as I have. Then you know many good men have to battle suspicion, and it doesn't hurt them when they are sure of themselves. Come, I have a great wood-pile, and you can pay me in full for your breakfast."

June didn't give Ike a chance to speak, scarcely think, in the next ten minutes. It was, indeed, a great wood-pile. A tithe of it would have put old Granny Thorpe beyond all fear of cold for the winter. Ike's saw was making music before June was fairly out of sight. He worked vigorously,

and it did him good. He gave vent to his ill-feelings thus, and calmed his spirit. When little Rose came out, not long after, she found quite a heap beside the wood-house.

The child sat down quietly on a log to watch him. Every now and then he sent her a smile. A child could always cause Ike's face to blossom.

"What is your name?" asked Rose.

"Isaac;" not stopping his work.

"Is that what your mother calls you?"

"Mother's dead. Granny says Isaac, but Hep and Beul say Ike."

"Who are Hep and Beul?"

"My sisters."

"Are they little like me?"

"No. Hep's tall. She's twelve now. Beul's ten."

A pause.

"You like to saw wood?"

"Yes. I like anything that's work. I've ached for work this six weeks. It seems good."

"Does it? My! I don't like work. That is,

not dusting, and wiping dishes. I'd like to make cake and pies and puddings, if old hateful June would let me!"

"She's not old or hateful!" objected Ike.

"N-o—but—she's Myraish. She brought herself up, June did. Aunt Myra tried to, you know, but couldn't. It must be awful nice to bring up one's self. I wonder how she'd like *me* to do as *I* please, as she did? I'd make pies the first thing."

"Perhaps she will let you when you're older," suggested Ike. "You're so little perhaps she fears you don't know how."

"Humph! Nobody knows nothing till they try. If she'd just let me do one baking, then she'd know."

Silence followed this for awhile, then:

"Do you know my Aunt Myra?" asked Rose.

"No."

"Don't you?" in astonishment. "I thought everybody knew her, 'cause she's good when folks are sick. Well, you'll know her when you see

her. She wears a straight black dress, just as narrow, and — and — a bonnet with a big green veil; and she looks just like this." And Miss Rose drew down the corners of her mouth, lengthened her face strangely, puckered up her lips and rolled her eyes, having first made spectacles of her forefingers and thumbs to place over them.

Ike stopped his work and laughed; laughed so heartily that Miss Rose, elated with her success, repeated the programme.

"I don't know why she wears spectacles, for her eyes are sharp enough, and they're 'most white. They used to be blue, you know, but they faded," explained the performer. "I wish you could see them roll when June has on the blue silk dress father bought her, or when we have jelly tarts and frosted cake for supper."

"I don't think Miss June looks anything like that," said Ike, resuming his work. "She isn't Myraish."

"O, no, she doesn't *look* like her, but she's kind of hard to get along with when one wants to cook.

Can you make swings, Ike?" suddenly changing the subject.

"Yes; nice ones."

"O, goody! will you make one for me?"

"Yes, when I get my work done."

"When will that be? soon?"

"Yes, pretty soon."

"O, dear! I wish you'd hurry. Do you s'pose I can help you?" and Miss Rose left her seat and held on to Ike's stick.

"Does that help?" Ike laughed, but he nodded assent.

They worked steadily for awhile, then, yielding to the child's importunity, Ike followed her to the barn. They had a peep at the hens as they went, however, and a long look at the two sleek horses.

"Papa has one off with him," said the little girl, "and this black fellow is June's. Isn't she lucky? She has a basket-carriage, too, and papa promised her a lovely sleigh if she would stay at home this winter. She wanted to go to school,

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"Does that help?" — Page 122.

but Mrs. Maria is sick. I'd promise never to go to school for a nice sleigh, wouldn't you?"

"Not for a hundred," was Ike's very decided answer, and then the swing was hung.

How delicious the barn was with the smell of hay. Ike longed to stay there. But he did not remain any longer than was necessary to put up the swing, notch a board nicely, and start Rose well with a few pushes; then he went back to the wood-pile.

All the discomfiture of the morning was gone. Ike whistled gayly as he swung his axe and pushed his saw. He did not hear Miss Juniper approaching until she stood beside him.

"You smart boy!" she cried. "Why, you've earned a dozen breakfasts! I forgot you until now, I was so busy, and it's 'most ten o'clock. You've earned your dinner, so, if you can't stop to eat a hot one I'll do up the best I've got. Have you far to go?"

"I don't know, miss, I'm sure," replied the boy.

"Where were you going? Perhaps I know the

distance? If it's on this road you may get a chance to ride with some countryman going by. Were you going W—— way?"

"I have no particular place. I am going anywhere that I can find work."

"O! This is a poor time to look for work this way. What is your name?"

"Isaac Paul Hobson."

"Isaac Paul; both Bible names. You ought to be very good. Have you a father and mother, Isaac?"

"Yes, miss, in heaven. Granny and Hephzibah and Beulah and I live together."

Hephzibah and Beulah! What funny names! I never heard them before."

"They're both out of the Bible. Granny named them."

"Well, I haven't read my Bible any too much in my life. Is granny your own grandmother?"

"Yes, miss."

"Then, if I were you I'd call her grandmother; it sounds better." Then, all unconscious of the

heightened color with which this criticism was received, Miss June stood a moment with pursed lips and contracted brows.

"I've a good mind to hire you myself, Isaac; how would you like that?" she said.

There was small reason to ask the question. Ike's eyes answered it unmistakably.

"There's more work than Tom can do," continued the girl, as if trying to convince herself rather than her listener. "Betty is always grumbling because the wood is not split, and there are those apples to pick over. Yes, I will keep you, Ike. I know you're a good boy to work, and to be trusted. What wages would you want?"

"What I am worth. If I only earn my board this winter that's better than being on granny — grandmother, I mean."

"Very well. You'll be sure to earn more than that. I will need you presently to pick over the apples. But for the present — Have you seen anything of Rose?"

"Yes, miss. She's in the barn, swinging."

"O! then you've hung her a swing?" with a bright flash of the eyes. "I'm glad. You can go swing her now, or do 'most anything until I need you. I wouldn't saw any more wood to-day," and June was gone.

There was time for quite a romp in the barn, the sawing of a little more wood, and the neat piling of all before June summoned Ike to the apple-bin, with sundry directions ending thus: "Eat all the apples you want. We have plenty."

The new boy was evidently a grand thing to Rose. She flitted about, working some, but talking more, and about noon-time darted off, returning immediately to say Miss June wanted him.

"It's 'cause Mrs. Maria wants to see you," added the sprite, as they went up-stairs together.

"You won't care. Of course she wishes to see you as I have hired you for good," added Miss June, to a repetition of the news above. "She will like you, I know; and if she does not it will make no difference."

So Ike was ushered into the august presence.

Mrs. Maria Hargreave was a tall, slender lady, with a very pallid countenance, tired-looking blue eyes, soft, drab hair, and a weak, nervous voice. Ike, crimson to the roots of his hair, bowed, as he came to a standstill, and said stammeringly, "Good-morning, Mrs. Maguire."

Juniper stifled a laugh in a little half-sob, half-giggle. Mrs. Hargreave looked shocked.

"You see the results of your disrespect now. I hope you are satisfied, Juniper," she said, reproachfully.

June was truly sorry, but she was obliged to keep silent. She feared to open her mouth lest her repressed merriment would explode. It was too funny, and poor Ike so evidently puzzled at the cause of the offence. She managed to keep a sober face through the questioning and cross-questioning of her protegee; but the door scarcely closed after them when she burst into a merry laugh.

"O, you funny fellow!" she said to Ike. "That is not a Mrs. Maguire, but Mrs. Hargreave,

my father's wife." Then, to alleviate the distress on the boy's countenance: "You are not in the least to blame. It is my fault. I call her Mrs. Maria, and you made a mistake. No one will blame you. I am the guilty party, and, remember, all your sins will be visited on me, since I have hired you on my own responsibility."

June did not know what a strong incentive she was giving the new boy to put him on his best behavior. Henceforth Ike walked softly.

Mr. Hargreave was not particularly well pleased with the account given him by his wife, on his late coming home. Mrs. Hargreave had the first opportunity and improved it. The gentleman was seriously annoyed by his wife's account of Ike's blunder, and sought his daughter with a clouded brow.

Who shall explain Miss Juniper Hargreave's legerdemain? In less than fifteen minutes her father was laughing uproariously at her exaggerated and well-acted account of Ike's interview with her step-mother. She certainly had a strange way of carrying her own point.

"Now, Popsydil, you know well enough that you hire extra men in busy times without a word of advice from me, and bring them in for me to feed; and I can't see the difference in my hiring a boy when I need one, and sending him to you for wages."

This was all, of the long conversation held in the sitting-room, that Ike heard as he passed through the dining-room on an errand for Betty. Miss June must be talking of him, and to the master. Ike's heart beat high, but he said no word. Betty's accounts of her master certainly did not serve to reassure him, and long after the maid was in bed he sat pondering his duty.

Ought he not to go away? Miss June would only get herself in trouble, perhaps, and he didn't wish to live where he wasn't wanted, needed. In the midst of his unpleasant cogitations Mr. Hargreave surprised him.

There was a merry twinkle in the gentleman's eyes as he confronted the lad, a twinkle that added a smile to his lips as the boy sprang to his feet.

"Well, and this is Miss June's last notion?" said he, eyeing the lad half curiously. "Not a bad one, either, if we are to believe her testimony and that of the wood-pile. 'New brooms sweep clean'; is that it, hey?"

"Good brooms always sweep clean." (Where did Ike find courage to say this?)

"Do they?" laughing; "and you're a good one? Well, I hope so. Do you know anything of farming, young man?"

"No, sir; but I can learn."

The answer pleased the gentleman—Ike had a frank way of winning hearts—and he extended his hand.

"I make no doubt you can. If you are a good, faithful boy, I may try you next summer. Perhaps Miss June is right again. You are to obey her, remember, and she is to answer for your shortcomings. She seems very willing to bear them. Good night;" and the gentleman disappeared.

Disappeared into the hall, where two eager hands waited to grasp him.

"You blessed old Popsydil! You did well!" said a merry voice, as, with a little spring, two arms were twined chokingly round the gentleman's neck.

"You little spy!" unclasping the hands, and whisking her into the bright sitting-room. "How do you know I did well?"

"I put my ear to the keyhole," eyes falling in prettily-assumed shame. "I beg your pardon; but I was so anxious, and — and — I've confessed, so it's not so dreadful. And you precious old thing!" white arms again endangering respiration, "you made him feel so well, and I love you dearly. But dear me! I must show him his room."

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CHAPTER VIII.

A FOUND-OUT AND ITS OUTCOME.

MISS JUNIPER'S good opinion of Ike was soon more than confirmed by the rest of the household. In less than a month he was an absolute necessity, and that not only to June and Betty.

He was willing to work, and handy, Tom said, and Mr. Hargreave, always in a hurry, soon found he could harness a horse quicker than anyone else, and that it was safer to trust a heated beast in his hands than in those of Tom.

No carelessness with Ike. The horses were always well rubbed down and blanketed and

cooled before eating, when he had them in charge ; always sleek and shiny after his brush.

Of course Miss Rose thought he was hired especially for her benefit, and even Mrs. Maria found he could build her fire with less dirt and noise than Betty ; and that he drove the horse more quietly than Tom when she wished to ride. Ike had been very attentive to her, and had tried hard to win her favor ; partly because she was an invalid, partly because he wished to make amends for his unfortunate blunder on the morning of his arrival.

He worked hard, but was never overworked. His evenings were seldom occupied. Occasionally a little meat to hash, or a few apples to pare, but generally nothing harder than a good book to read ; for June was a kind mistress, and, finding her boy fond of books, supplied him liberally, both from her own library and her father's.

He never visited his grandmother or Bry without a basket of apples or some little gift from Juniper, who was much interested in them both.

III.

OUTCOME.

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Old granny and Bryony both missed Ike's helpful ways and cheery words, but both likewise rejoiced in his prosperity, and in the roundness already perceivable in his limbs and face. Good fare and an easy mind were showing their work on Ike, and he had even "grown a bit taller," granny said.

On Our Street things went on much as usual. Bry had new neighbors, a Mr. Ezekiels and his family having moved into the chambers vacated by Edward Parker.

A strange specimen of mankind was this same Ezekiels; a specimen of ruined manhood, for the little original sense he possessed had long since been washed away by whisky. Mr. Ezekiels was a specimen of the work done by Mr. Jenkins and his numerous fraternity.

He was a little, pinched-up affair, with a red nose, and lackadaisical countenance, a pair of blinking eyes, and ill-kept hair and beard. He was small, *very* small, every way, and loved bad whisky a little better than anything else in this

world or another. It is even questionable if he knew of anything else in this world or another, unless it was his wife's shoe. He couldn't well help knowing something about that, as well acquainted as it had become with his back.

Most people called him "Old Zeke." He called himself "Mr. 'Zek-els," with a hiccough between the two syllables into which he divided it.

Elizabeth Ezekiels, or Lize, as almost everybody called her, was tall and wiry. A meeker, more timid and shrinking girl few men have ever led to the altar than was she when Thomas Ezekiels married her. But a long life with one of rum's weakest slaves had strangely changed her. The quiet voice had become harsh and grating, the light step quick and determined, the soft eyes bright and defiant, the timid spirit bold and daring; to-day she ruled with a rod of iron where once she had crouched like a slave.

But this had been the work of time. For years she had borne harsh words and cruel blows, hard labor and stinted fare. At the last it was the

cruelty of this man she called husband to her child and his, their first-born, her George Washington, her heart's idol, that roused the tigress within her. She felled him to the earth that hour, and learned the fatal secret of her strength.

Unlucky knowledge this for Ezekiel. No longer her hard earnings went to swell the coffers of the rumseller. He who had feasted, fasted; he who had gluttoned unto beastliness, thirsted unto madness; but no arguments moved her heart of adamant, no honied words unlocked her steeled bosom.

"Work, if you wish to drink; I have enough to do to feed you." But work he would not, and, a cringing fool, he hung around the drinking-houses, now and again regaled by some more fortunate chum pitying his poverty, or by a penny draught purchased with the coppers coaxed from his little children.

Perhaps it was a misfortune to Elizabeth Ezekiel as well as her husband that she learned the secret of her strength. It certainly robbed

her of the little womanliness and gentleness she possessed, all that was left to her of her lost girlhood.

Yet, in good truth, what right has a drunkard's wife to womanliness and gentleness? Hers is the heritage of shame, of cruel blows, and words more cruel still. A beast alone should wed a beast. God pity her who, in her degradation, yet *feels*.

Better a heart of stone, for flesh bleeds. But, mark you; when the last red drop is gone it hardens into steel. Did he not know of life who wrote:

- "Be void of feeling! A heart that soon is stirred,
Is a possession sad upon this changing earth."

The neighbors interested Bryony, as everything did. She could not count the children at first, they seemed so much of a size, so like in feature; but their noise overhead often sent her to bed with throbbing temples.

She was very kind and patient with the little

things, who darted in and out of her room, peeping into everything, asking unheard-of questions, twirling their fingers from their noses at her. Sometimes she coaxed them to her side for a little, and told them the stories of which she was so full. What child is not charmed by a ready invention? Ere long, from George Washington to three-year-old May, she had one means of controlling them, and when banished from home they would seek her side, promising to be still if she would tell a story.

POOR Bry! She prayed very much for her new friends. The sound of harsh words above sent her repeatedly to her medicine and medicine Giver inquiring how she could help them. Elizabeth had been very kind to Bry from the first. Her woman's heart had gone out to the orphaned cripple, and she came in often to do little chores, or bring her some tid-bit.

In return for this Bry loved her warmly, and loved no less, in an angelic way, the poor little miserable-looking man, who slunk out of his wife's

presence much after the pattern of a whipped dog. She followed him down the street often with sorrowing eyes and questioning heart, but Dick despised him. In his youth and strength he looked with disgust upon that to which his footsteps hastened.

One cold day Dick was home from work. He was a carpenter, and there were times when the weather made his labor impossible. Late in the afternoon old Ezekiel came reeling home. He had met with friends, and got enough for once. Dick, sitting at the window, gave an impatient grunt as he saw him.

"What is it?" asked Bry. "O! poor Mr. 'Zekiel. O, Dicky! he's sick—very sick. Go help him in, or he'll fall."

"Sick!" said Dick, sarcastically; "sick! Yes! drunk, you'd better say!"

Bry looked at him with round, inquiring eyes.

"Drunk?" she said after him, slowly, "is everybody drunk that acts like that?"

"Why, yes," said Dick.

Bry lay back in her chair, forgetful, for a moment, of everything, even the poor man on the sidewalk. She was so still Dick turned to her. The pallor of her face frightened him. He thought she was fainting.

"Bryony, are you sick?" he cried. He was a loving, warm-hearted boy. "What is it, dear?"

She put out one hand to him imploringly, and asked piteously, "Not always, Dicky dear, not always drunk when they look so? *You* look like that, sometimes."

Dick's face crimsoned with shame, yet he spoke the truth: "Yes, little Bry, always."

"O Dick! Dick! what shall I do?" Such a moan of despair. Dick felt the perspiration start to his forehead as he got up and walked the room.

When he sat down again little Bry's hand grasped her Bible tightly, her eyes devouring some verse.

"'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,'" he interrupted her, his voice full of the earnest impulse of the hour. "That's it, Bry! 'Look

not!' If I never looked I'd never drink. But I'll stop! I *will* stop! I've entered Jenks' for the last time."

He placed his hand on her head as he spoke, and she drew first it and then his lips to her face. "You never told me a lie," she said.

Weeks flew by, and Dick kept his pledge, but old 'Zekiels had a new place in Bry's thoughts. Her father had died from strong drink. Could she not save this man?

Meanwhile things went on as usual up-stairs.

One afternoon, after a morning's hard work out washing, Lize was cleaning up her house, working busily, scolding furiously.

"It's very strange all this work is left to me. The ashes ain't even emptied. I'm ashamed of you, Tom Ezekiels! You haven't a smart bone in your body."

"Bessie, my dear, Bessie, I'll clear out the ashes," stammered the gentleman addressed, in an exasperatingly soft, silly manner.

"O! you will, will you? Then why wasn't it

done before? None of your Bessying me! Bessie indeed! Bessie! A darling, an angel, a tenderling. Bessie! Washerwoman, budget, nursery-maid, old drudge, and the mother of a hundred and one children!"

Mrs. Ezekiels was wont to sum up all her troubles in this way, recently: "The mother of a hundred and one children, and that poor little orphan with no mother in the world!" Did it never strike her that little Bry, motherless, was as well off as many children possessing an article so labelled?

"Elizabeth, don't 'zaggerate. Not a hundred and one! only eleven," interrupted the husband.

"That's just the same, with the cipher left out, you numb-head!" shouted George Washington, irreverently.

"Elizabeth, children — children are — are a — a crown of honor to a woman," stammered the old gentleman, waxing eloquent.

"Shut up, you old fool!" was the very encouraging reception his eloquence received. "Don't

Elizabeth me. Elizabeth's a queen. Elizabeth, indeed! My rags look like velvet, and my old hack like a crown! Get out of this!"

"Now, Lize, you're cross again. You shouldn't git mad when a feller's only trying to be civil."

"Civil! I'll civil you if you call me Lize again. That's what a woman comes to! Once butter wouldn't melt in your mouth with your Bessying and Elizabething. O, yes! I'm nothing but old Lize now, old slouch, old sloven, old slave!"

"Mrs. 'Zek'-els," meekly interposed the husband at this juncture, "Mrs. 'Zek'-els, you are as dear to me as ever. I honor you as the mother of—"

"Your brats!" interrupting violently. "You ever call *me* Mrs. Ezekiels again, and I'll help you down-stairs. Mrs. Ezekiels indeed! I am sunk low when that is flung in my face. *You* needn't taunt me with being fool enough to marry you—I'm sure you've got the best of it. Get out of this house, or—" Mrs. Ezekiels stooped to loosen her shoe, and her husband disappeared.

Bry heard the angry voices above, she heard the slouchy step on the stairs. "He's going to Mr. Jenkins' again. P'raps I can stop him," she thought. So at the door she met him.

"Will you come in and sit with me and talk, Mr. Ezekiel?" she said, timidly. "I'm lonesome sometimes." And he slouched into the room and into a chair, after a furtive glance around. He did not seem disposed to talk, but this did not trouble Bry so long as she had him there, so she sat wondering how he had looked when young. Certainly, never like her Dick!

Suddenly the company broke silence.

"This is a good fire. It's heaps warmer here than there."

"Where?" asked Bry, innocently; "at Mr. Jenkins'?"

Foolish Bry! Did she not know that Mr. Jenkins' saloon was the drunkard's paradise? Poor old Zeke never felt prouder than when he was rich enough to purchase an entrance, for Mr. Jenkins never allowed hangers-on — that is, of the poor kind.

"No," answered Zeke; "I meant up there," pointing to the ceiling. "Lize is mostly cross."

"She works hard, and gets tired," said Bry, defensively.

"It ain't that as ails her," replied Zeke. "I"—bending his head forward with a knowing wink and lowering his voice—"I began wrong with her." He looked around sheepishly after saying this, as if expecting the well-worn shoe.

Bry had no answer to make, of course, so, seeing no danger from a shoe, he continued:

"Wimmen is wimmen, and they's growing bold; they're mostly cunnin', too. Yer see you've got to begin right. Wimmen need man'gin', they does. No, I didn't begin right."

"How did you begin?" now asked Bry, a little curiously.

"With a nice place, and good fixin's, and no work. You see, if I'd put her right to't from the fust she'd 'a' made her mind up, likely, and stood it. But I didn't know, and she got chuck full of notions. Wimmen is mostly full of 'em, and they're bad for 'em."

Mr. Ezekiels was not used to so good a listener, so he waxed warm, and became unusually loquacious. Bry was thinking. She was losing fear, also, of his wheedling whims. So, as he ended, she began:

"I think perhaps you began wrong with yourself, Mr. 'Zekiels," she said, bravely. "It is right to be good to your wife, 'cause God says so, and it's wrong to drink bad things, that make folks drunk, 'cause He says so." ("He says so" was the end of the law to Bry.) "Don't you think you began wrong with yourself when you began to drink?"

No, evidently he did not think so. It would have taken one far more eloquent than our little Bry to convince Mr. Ezekiels that he hadn't done the wisest thing of his life when he learned to drink. There had been a time when he lamented it, but that was years ago, before he drowned his conscience. So he shook his head, very gravely but decidedly now, shook and shook it, as if, having set it going—like the pendulum of a clock—it was loathe to stop.

Bry was by no means disconcerted at this. She opened her Bible and began to read aloud. It was years since the poor drunkard had heard the Bible read, and now he did not take in its sense, but he kept his head going, as a perpetual negative, quite sure she was still trying to convince him of his error. Presently, however, the head stopped. It made two or three sudden jerks instead, a little bob, a great bob, a mighty plunge, then suddenly settled back to the chair, while a tremendous snore startled the reader. Mr. Zeke had gone to sleep.

We must admit that our little friend was sorely disturbed. What if some one should call while he was making such a noise! What would Dick say if he found him there? But her fears were groundless. Mr. Ezekiel slept, evidently, with one ear open for any indications of a coming slipper. When, in the course of an hour, Mrs. Ezekiel, coming into the entry, issued a few commands to her small fry, preparatory to descending the stairs, the sleeper suddenly aroused himself,

rubbed his eyes, looked about him sheepishly, and darted out of the back door.

Poor Mrs. Ezekiel! Bry's little heart was bursting with sympathy for her, and it ran over in a warm smile as she entered the room.

"It just does a body good to look at you, you poor little creetur," the woman said. "I thought mebbe you'd need something done."

"I just needed to see you," said Bry, "and I wish you'd let me kiss you. I'm so sorry you're not happy," patting the face presented to her, "and I wish I could find you some med'cine."

"You're med'cine yourself," sobbed the woman, overcome by this show of sympathy. "I'm nothing but a hateful old thing! Nobody loves me — not even the children; and I don't see why you care!"

"Jesus loves you dearly." There was no manner of doubt in Bryony's voice. "*He* wants to make you happy, and that's one reason I do. His friends are all mine. I love everybody *He* does."

Every word of the child's made the woman's tears flow more freely.

"I git so tired, and then I git cross; and I say things He can't like, and I forgit He lives or cares," she said.

Bry's Book was open. "I've got it!" she cried, joyfully, "I've got your med'cine!" And she read: "'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

She read more than this, much more; but, long after Mrs. Ezekiels had gone up-stairs, those magic words rang in her ears. They made her voice softer, her words fewer, her husband's greeting less severe.

"'Rest!'" she sighed that night. "'Rest!'" Then there is rest in Him; she said so."

CHAPTER IX.

MR. JENKINS IS CHARITABLE.

WINTER did not depart ere Bryony's heart was smitten again. Dick broke his word—the frail word of a man unaided by higher power—he came home to her drunk! Yes, drunk! she knew the truth now. How hard she tried to call it sick, as heretofore. Alas! the veil was riven—the blow fell on the quivering child-heart without one intervening film. Her anguish, through that bitter night, God alone could fathom.

She wept above him in her pain at first—tears are so natural to youth; but he swore at her out of his drunkenness, and the tears froze in her eyes. The morning light found them undimmed with

aught but hopeless horror; she almost forgot her Bible. It was only when he had gone out again, rushing out from her face as if it maddened him, that she remembered her medicine. Then she opened it.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." Her eyes dilated with surprise. She shut the book and folded her hands above it. How could this work out good?

Little Bry was not the first who has tried to search out Almightyness. It was not strange that it led her on a strange errand. Perhaps Mr. Jenkins would stop selling liquor if he knew it made men sick; perhaps it did not make everyone sick as it did Dick; if he stopped that would be working good. So her decision was taken to visit Mr. Jenkins' saloon.

Bry might have found some difficulty in carrying out her resolution, had not Ike happened in the city that morning. June had sent him in with a load of wood for his grandmother, and he was to stay all day and saw and pile it.

He listened to Bryony's story with ardent sympathy and interest, and though he had little hope of the success of her errand, he readily promised to take her to Mr. Jenkins' saloon as soon as the evening shades should fall.

A strange-looking little object it was that Ike almost carried along. Bry had not been out since her mother's death, and had no fit apparel. She found an old gray shawl of her mother's, however, and a quilted hood, much too large, under which her face looked very small and witch-like. But neither Bry nor her escort were particular about her appearance.

Ike hesitated at the door of the saloon.

"Are you afraid to go in? Do you want me, Bry?" he inquired. "I said once I'd never enter it; but this time I can if you wish."

"No, I'd rather you wouldn't," replied the child. "Stand where I can call you easy when I want to go."

So Ike helped her into the brilliant saloon, and shut the door.

It looked like a very magnificent place to little Bry. She glanced from the cut-glass decanters, with their shining liquids, to the spruce-looking young man who had made his appearance as the door closed, with some bewilderment. Surely, this could not be the place where Dick got sick! —but Ike had said so, truthful Ike.

"Are you Mr. Jenkins, sir?" she asked, in answer to the demand of what she wanted.

"No, I am not," was the rather gruff reply. "He's engaged."

"Then I will wait. I must see him," sighed Bry, a little wearily, leaning on her crutches.

The clerk did not offer her a chair, for he hoped she would go soon. In a few minutes, seeing no evidences of departure, he raised his voice and called out:

"Mr. Jenkins! you're wanted, sir."

At this a pleasant-looking, portly gentleman appeared at the door of a small room adjoining the shop. He was so well-dressed, and good-looking, that our little friend was quite sure now that he did *not* know rum made men sick.

"What's wanting, Sands? Ah, a child! Well, my dear, can I do anything for you?" a very sweet, insinuating voice. Bry's courage rose.

"Yes, sir. If you'll please not sell any more drink to Dick."

"Dick? Ah, well now, who's Dick?"

"Please, sir, he's my Daily Bread."

"Your 'Daily Bread'?" Mr. Jenkins' voice was full of amusement, and he turned and winked at a few loafers who had followed him from the back room.

"Here's fun for you, boys. Well," turning to Bry, "well, little girl, what's the matter with the bread? Sour, or stale, hey? Don't it suit you?"

"O, yes, sir; when he don't spend it for—for drink."

Mr. Jenkins did not wince. He only said, in a jolly way:

"Not enough of it? That's the trouble! Well"—assuming a grave manner—"I never encourage any man in spending for liquor that which is needed at home. Come, boys, out with

your purses. Sands, hand me a couple of dollars from the drawer. We'll take a subscription for this little one."

In less time than it has taken me to write this, Mr. Jenkins had gathered quite a little sum, and offered it to the unsuspecting child. But Bryony shrank back.

"O, no, sir! I don't want money, indeed I don't! I couldn't take it, please. I only don't want you to sell Dick any more drink."

In vain Mr. Jenkins urged. Bry was firm, and of course the men refused to take back their share of the money, so it was put in the till, to be drank up afterwards, and Mr. Jenkins turned to the child.

"Well, it seems that I cannot do anything for you, after all," he said.

"O, yes sir, please. You can keep Dick from drinking. It makes him sick, and so it does Mr. 'Zekiels. I s'posed you didn't know it, sir, or you wouldn't let him have it. P'r'aps it don't make 'em all sick."

"No, only the lack of it. How's that?" winking at his companions. Mr. Jenkins was evidently getting funny. "Now here are fellows," waving his hand towards the group, "who are only sick when they can't get it." And Bry, looking about timidly, saw an array of bloated faces and grinning mouths that almost frightened her; and behind—yes, surely, at the door of the inner room, a face she knew. Edward Parker's! The face was withdrawn hastily—she wasn't quite sure; but a great surge of pain swept over her heart, and she half sobbed out: "Little Stevie!"

Mr. Jenkins proceeded. "Now, my dear, if it makes Dick sick, he ought not to buy liquor. I'm not answerable for that, and, as I don't know Dick"—another knowing wink—"why, I'm not to blame, am I?"

"Please, sir, God says, 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken, also.'"

"Yes, my dear; but I don't put the bottle to their mouths. I let them wait on themselves."

Mr. Jenkins was getting funny again; very funny, his comrades evidently thought.

"But, sir," continued the brave little advocate, "what makes some folks so dreadful sick can't be good for anybody."

This certainly looked convincing, but Mr. Jenkins was equal to the occasion.

"Might as well argue that oil isn't good for a German because I can't eat it on my potatoes. No, no, little one, you're not right. But I'm sorry for you, and I'll see that Dick don't deprive you of your daily bread again. Good evening;" and Bry, knowing not what else to do, went out.

She said not a word to Ike, and he asked no questions, feeling sure that she was troubled sorely. Safely at home again, seated in her chair, wraps laid aside, she breathed freely once more, and, as Ike, having replenished the fire, took a seat beside her, she said solemnly — decidedly: "Ike, if he sells Dick any more drink, I shall have to *shut up his shop — and I will!*"

"A strange little body — a very strange little

body!" Jenkins said, rubbing his hands together, as the child went out. "But she must not suffer. I don't approve of this abuse of women and children. I must send my wife over to see that she doesn't want anything."

Mr. Jenkins' charitableness was applauded on the spot; it was spoken of warmly elsewhere, and reaching Gregory Hudworth's ears, was repeated to his mother.

The good woman scouted the idea of his charity, and thought he might well feed those he robbed; nevertheless, she laid the item away in her heart, and the next time the temperance organization to which she belonged needed funds, she suggested that Mr. Jenkins was said to be liberal.

The result was that Mrs. Tibbs, treasurer of the society, called on the aforesaid gentleman, and had an extra ten dollars in her purse when she left.

"He said there was no man in the city more desirous of putting down these low groggeries, and stopping the sale of cheap, poisonous liquors

than he!" she reported to Widow Grafham, afterwards.

"Old hypocrite!" was the reply. "But I'm glad we've got so much out of him."

Dick felt hopelessly disgraced on hearing of the step his sister had taken, and made up his mind never to enter the saloon again. A poor making-up, however, it proved. Mr. Jenkins had no idea of losing his custom, and was unusually kind, calling him in as he went by one day. "It was only a child's whim," he said. "A nice little girl, very nice." So, before the close of a week, Bry had another night of misery. Then the cry went up, from pale, firm lips: "O, God, shut up Mr. Jenkins' shop, for Jesus' sake."

But Mr. Jenkins did not forget his intention to send his wife to Dick Perkins' home, and one morning a tall, stout lady, in an elegant morning-dress, a delicate nubia covering her dark braids, and a rich shawl thrown over her shoulders, made her way, basket in hand, to Bry's humble apartment.

There was something bright and pleasant about the woman's face, which pleased Bryony at once. The stranger asked a few questions about the child's health, then into her circumstances. But Bryony was little used to speak of her poverty, and did not admit that her cupboard was empty. Dick had been very wild, lately, and they were poorly fed, yet but few knew it from Bry.

Presently the stranger revealed her name and errand. "Mr. Jenkins does not wish anyone to suffer. I have brought you a nice breakfast."

She lifted the napkin. A plate of cold chicken, a nice white loaf, a print of golden butter, some cookies, a pie. Bry shut her eyes on the tempting vision, as she said, firmly:

"I can't take it! I can't!"

"Why, you foolish child, of course you can," said the lady, not understanding. "I am not robbing myself—we have plenty. You will do me a real favor by receiving this."

But still Bry shook her head.

"You are good, real good, but I can't take it. Sick folks' money bought it!"

The lady's color rose slightly at this, yet she answered, pleasantly:

"Doctors make their money on sick folks."

"Yes, makin' 'em well, or tryin' 'too. That's lovely! it's most like God. But — but — when it's makin' 'em sick, you know, it's dreadful!" She did not add "It's 'most like the devil!" but she thought it and shuddered. "I couldn't keep such money," she went on, warmly — her little heart had been stung by this foe — "I couldn't eat the bread it bought! It's like Judas' silver — the price of blood. And he knows it makes 'em sick *now* — I told him. If he don't stop selling it, *God will stop him*, and shut up his shop. I've asked him to, in Jesus' name, and He always says 'Yes.' I thank you just the same. You can't help his selling that, but I'm *so* sorry for you, 'cause you're his wife. It must be dreadful to know he makes 'em sick, and you can't help it. But I couldn't eat the good things! they'd choke me when I thought how Dick only gets — gets sick-makers there!"

Mrs. Jenkins' anger was really roused at this.

"You ungrateful little creature!" she cried indignantly; "and so impudent, for such a child! Indeed, I will take it home! it's all too good for such as you!" And so saying she left the room, and Bry burst into tears.

Her grief was violent, but not long-lived, for presently she put up one thin hand and stroked her own cheek, soothingly.

"Don't cry, little Bry," she said, coaxingly. "You didn't mean to do wrong, and God 'looketh on the heart'; the med'cine said so this morning. It's all right with Him, and He can make it all right with everyone else."

Just then Widow Grafham peeped into the room.

"What! crying?" she said, advancing. "See! I have brought you a bit of my breakfast," taking from under her apron a plate with a nice slice of beefsteak, a round of toast, and a spoonful of strawberry preserves.

Bry's eyes sparkled through tears.

"I knew He'd send it!" she cried. "He always does, but you see I sent the first away," and then out came the whole story.

Widow Grafham was divided between anger at Bryony, and indignation at Jenkins.

"You might have kept it—you needed it! He owes you much more—the robber! Insulting things! I wouldn't have kept it! 'Twould have choked you, I expect! I'd have thrown it in her face. There! don't fret. God'll take care of you. This is pudding day, you know." And the widow kissed the child, and hurried away to the shop.

CHAPTER X.

MISS JUNIPER OUT ON DUTY.

MISS JUNIPER HARGREAVE was actuated continually by a great desire to do her duty. Her religion was much more one of obedience than of love. Not that they are incompatible, but that we sometimes find the one or the other predominating. It takes years of experience to wed them, in some instances, while in others, as in little Bry Perkins, they spring up side by side. But it was in the direction of little Bry that Miss June's call to duty lay at present.

She had heard of her from Ike, and had formed an opinion of her; yet it must be confessed not a very accurate one. She knew she was a cripple,

and a sufferer. But she did not know that she was a Christian, in the broadest sense of the word, and daily underwent a discipline of pain and sorrow unknown to many old disciples.

Ike had never spoken of Dick's infirmity, his manhood forbade this. So while his words of praise and love in regard to his little friend won Miss June's interest in her, she had a very imperfect conception of the child.

June had felt, for a long time, that she ought to visit Bry. That perhaps she could teach her, or help her to Christ; find out some of her daily needs and supply them, for June was true at heart.

She had early done her duty by Ike, asking him many plain questions, which had probed his heart, unveiling it to himself; making him conscious of a lack there, giving him an estimate of his need of Christ, such as he had not known before. Ike was a good boy, well brought up, naturally conscientious; but he was not a Christian.

"You must give yourself to Jesus," said June

to him one evening, as they talked together. "That's what Christian means — belonging to Christ. Looking outside, I fear I do not appear much better to others than I used to; but I belong to a different party. I serve another Master. I am changed inside. Don't ever pattern by me, Ike, that isn't what I mean at all. Jesus is the only pattern safe to follow, and you are naturally better than I. You have always been good and straight in your conduct, but I am irregular — was born so; I wish I wasn't" — with a little sigh — "but Jesus knows, and he makes a difference."

Ike did not readily forget June's teachings. He followed her advice, too, and made a surrender of self. He was conscious of an inward change, not violent, but deep. His Bible and its Jesus became dearer, and, yes — he was conscious, too, that his love for his young mistress grew daily stronger.

She not as good as him! She irregular! Irregularity was very beautiful, then. Who would be regular?

June helped Ike, and knew it. He helped her

daily, without the knowledge of either. His conscientiousness in all things, his tenderness to Mrs. Hargreave, fretful invalid that she was, preached sermons continually to the erratic miss, sermons by which she profited, though unconsciously.

It was growing late in the season, but sleighing was still good, and June decided, one sunny morning, that this was the day for her long-contemplated visit to Bryony.

Betty was away — had been gone a week, to visit her mother, who was ill; but Mrs. Maria was feeling unusually well that day, and June got ready for departure.

"There's nothing to be done, Ike, but just a little hot apple-sauce for father; he can't do without that. You can make that, after seeing me do it so often. One cup of sugar, about two of hot water, brought to a boil; then drop in your quartered apples, and be sure not to let them mash."

Yes, Ike could remember, and could do all that; but Miss Rose was very indignant.

"I am a girl," she cried, "and know more than any boy about it. To think of leaving Ike Hobson to make apple sauce, as if I was an idiot! I shall make it myself."

In vain Jun. protested, in vain Rose plead. Ike followed the young lady from the room. "I will superintend it faithfully, Miss June, if you'll please let her try," he said, so Rose received the desired permission.

Great was Bry's surprise when the beautiful sleigh stopped at her door. She watched the tiny lady as she fastened and blanketed her horse. Then there was a light rap, the opening of her door, and June, radiantly lovely, with her blooming cheeks and pretty robes, stood before the child.

All the way there June had been preparing herself for her talk. She had quite made out a plan as to how she should begin, and how she should behave. So it was with all the teach-you-something-edness of a young lady of fifteen, fully convinced of the mightiness of her undertaking, that

she took a seat, and introduced herself as Miss Hargreave.

Bry was always pleased to see company, and she made Miss Hargreave very welcome, though without the slightest idea that she was Ike's Miss June. She rather thought the young lady had made a mistake — that she was looking for Mrs. Ezekiels; ladies came sometimes to hire her. So to her cordial invitation to June to take a seat she added: "Mrs. 'Zekiels lives up-stairs. She is out, now, but you can leave any order with me, if you please."

"I did not come to see Mrs. Ezekiels," said June, briefly; "I came to see you, if you are Bryony Perkins."

"And I am. How good you are! What made you come to see me?"

Bryony's eyes were shining into June's. The child was evidently one of the grateful sort. June liked that.

"O, I thought perhaps I could do you some good, or teach you something."

"How good you are!" warmly again. Bry didn't seem to notice the teach-you-something-ness of the voice.

Her questions had somewhat upset the order of Miss June's exercises, however. But at this juncture the young lady began her regular catechizing.

"Are you a Christian?"

"No; mother is, but I'm only one of the lambs."

"What lambs?"

"Jesus' lambs. The ones he told Peter and Mr. Gardenell, and all the min'sters to take care of," replied Bry, simply.

"Why, then, you're a Christian, of course, if you belong to Jesus. When were you converted?"

The child lifted a puzzled face.

"I never was con—converted, not that I 'member. P'raps I was when I was a teenty-tonty. Are *you* converted, Miss Hargreave?" unmistakable admiration in her voice.

"Of course. Everybody is that is a Christian, and you must have been, or how did you find Jesus?" Miss June had taken religion as she had the chicken-pox and measles, in the regular way. Had felt bad, had risen for prayers, felt better, and was baptized. She could not conceive of any other way.

"I didn't find him," said Bry, timidly. Miss June's manner was awe-inspiring. "He found me, please. P'raps it was 'cause I was lame. You know I forgot to grow when I was a little girl, and couldn't go far for him. So he came. It was real comfortable in him, wasn't it, Miss Hargreave?"

Juniper did not answer this question. She was looking at Bryony, in very much the same way she would have examined a new specimen in botany.

"How did he come?" she inquired. "Did you feel any different?"

"It was just after I forgot to grow," said Bry. "I didn't feel comfortable, and I used to cry, so he sent me a letter."

"Who?" interrupted June.

"Jesus."

June looked very incredulous, but little Bry, nothing disconcerted, continued:

"He didn't write it himself, he got one of his min'sters, Mr. Gardenell, to do it; but he told him what to say, so 'twas just as good. And it said he wanted all the children for his lambs, and told about little Violet. You know she loved Jesus, *and he sent for her!*" lowering her voice as if telling news too good to be spoken aloud; "and I 'spect he'll send for me some day, and then she'll be so glad to see me!"

Bryony spoke so like one eager to meet an old friend that June interrupted again with:

"Who? Violet? Did you know her?"

"O, yes, I always knew her, only I didn't know her name was Violet. I saw her lots of times before I heard of her, and I see her now every time I shut my eyes. She's so—so beautiful! Such blue eyes, and long, bright curls, like the sunshine; and O, when she smiles, I have to open

my eyes quick, for fear I *couldn't* stay any longer, even to be Dick's *med'cine*," and Bry gave a sigh of *real* longing. "But she's waiting for me, and we'll be so happy by and by. There'll be plenty of time to be comfortable with her after my work is done. Mother said he'd send for me as soon's it was."

There was something very suspicious looking in June's eyes.

"Did you tell me all the way Jesus found you?" she asked, gently.

"'Most all. You know if he wanted *all* the children he wanted *me*; and—I—just let him take me."

"But didn't you pray, or feel sorry for your sins?" objected the young lady.

"But *he* knew I was wicked when he said he wanted me," replied Bry. "He wanted *all* of me, he said so; and the wicked was part, so I just did nothing at all but shut my eyes and *let him take me*. When I opened my eyes mother asked *me* what I was doing, and I said, 'Letting Jesus take

me.' So she knelt right down and asked him to keep me forever, and he has. Everything is comfortable now. There's sunshine inside all the time."

Miss Hargreave suddenly ended her teach-you-something-edness, by placing a hearty, clinging kiss on little Bry's face.

"To think I came here to teach you! You're just a darling, and teaching me lots and lots of things, just as Ike said!"

"Why! do you know my Ikey boy?" asked the little girl in astonishment.

"Of course I do! He lives at our house."

"O!" how Bry's eyes rounded out. "And you are Miss June, that lives at the farm-house!" lingering over that last word as if her mouth dreaded to lose its flavor. "Of course you are Miss June Hargreave! how stupid I am! Yes," shutting her eyes a moment, and pursing her mouth in a comical fashion, "you look just like her after Ike's been here. It's funny I didn't know you—I thought I should the moment I saw

you! but you didn't just act like yourself, at first."

June laughed, but it must be confessed she was a little ashamed that she hadn't acted herself. "You have a brother?" she asked, presently.

"O, yes; Dick. He's my 'daily bread.'"

June looked up in surprise. "'Daily bread'?" she said, inquiringly.

"Yes. You know I couldn't earn bread," replied Bry, simply, "so he earns enough for both."

"O!" That was all June said, but it expressed volumes. To think of this child regarding a grown-up brother in the light of daily bread! How prosaic! If there was anything June did covet it was such a brother. A big brother. She thought she would have been willing to work for him, deny herself, do almost anything to please him. Dick! that sounded wild and rugged; just suited June. So she said, with a quick little breath:

"I wish he was my brother. Dick's a splendid name."

"Yes, it is," returned Bry. "It's big and broad and funny and nice and" — hesitating for a word that would express it all — "and comfortable," with a sigh of satisfaction.

June laughed.

"Is he anything like you?" she queried, relishing the child's quaintness.

"Dick?" in surprise. "O, no! Why, he's daily bread, and I'm only med'cine, you know. We eat bread every day, but only want med'cine once in a while when we're sick. I forgot to grow when I was little, and have been waiting ever since —"

"Waiting?" interrupted June.

"Yes. Waiting for a — a push up. It hasn't come yet — not quite — but it will. I haven't quite stood still — I've grown a little bit taller. I asked Dick if I hadn't grown, and he said 'Yes, spindling.' It's better to grow spindling than not at all, isn't it, Miss June?"

"I don't know. Yes, I suppose so," replied June, with lips that quivered a little.

"But Dick never forgot to grow. He's big and broad and — comfortable. I'd rather be bread, but — it's nice to be something. You'd rather be med'cine than nothing, wouldn't you, Miss June?"

"I don't know," said June, who was not partial to medicine. "I'm not sure, anyway, that I'm as much as that."

"O, yes, you are. Ike says so. He says the farm-house couldn't be run without you." Another strange lingering over farm-house, fairyland to little Bry, who had never seen inside one. "I 'spect you're apples and pies and puddings — big puddings, you know, with lots of raisins in 'em. Ike says you're just like a bird — a wild bird. That's so nice! I like birds. When I sing sometimes Dick calls me his canary. That's comfortable — to be two things, you know. But a wild-bird! a sparrow, or a robin with a red-breast — that's lovely!"

"A canary is better than a robin," said matter-of-fact Juniper; "it sings sweeter."

"Yes; but—it's always in a cage. It can't fly off and sing to everybody." (Was there a touch of pain in little Bry's voice?) "Robins dance on the trees, and build little really truly nests for the children to peep into. O, it's nice to be a robin, but, if you can't, it's nice to be a canary. I'd rather be a bird in a cage than a worm that could crawl everywhere. It's so nice to *have* wings, if *you ever want to use 'em.*"

June was being taught, surely. The afternoon wore away, pleasantly. June told Bry of her sunny bay window, with its many plants, and Bry imparted to her a secret in return. "By-and-by, when Ike's time comes, we're going to have a bay-window. You see the sun always shines in here through that window a little while, and he thinks a bay window would catch a lot more of the sun's rays; so it's settled, but I must wait. I'll have plants, then, like yours."

This led them to talk of Ike.

"Isn't he grand?" asked Bryony.

June hardly agreed to this.

"He's good," she said, "but not grand. You know he's small."

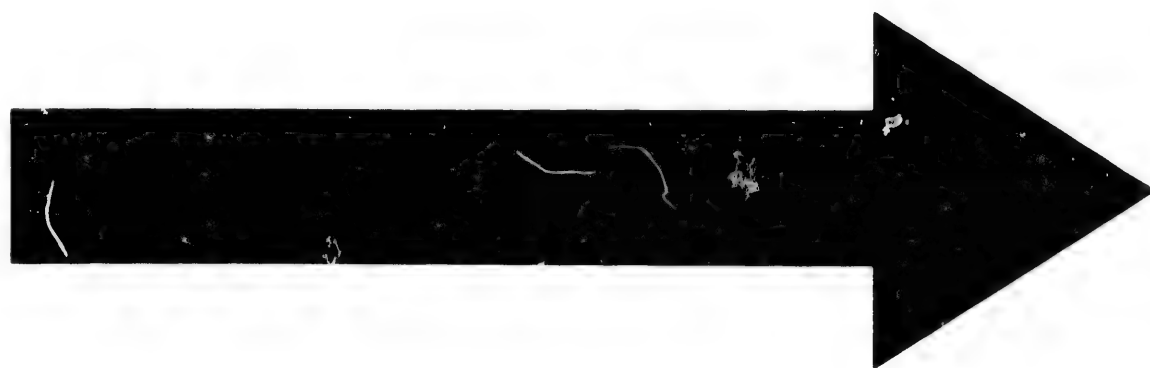
"Is he?" This was unmistakably a revelation to Bry. "He must be very big inside, then, he has such great thoughts, and he loves everybody."

June could not deny this, yet all the way home she was absorbed, not by thoughts of Ike Hobson, and how she could build him higher, but of that wonderful Dick, of whom she had heard.

Meanwhile, there had been trouble at the farmhouse. Ike's charge was very refractory. He had to devise unheard-of games to keep her from making the apple-sauce soon after June's departure; and when at last it was time to begin, she would not allow the slightest interference or help from Ike. "It is my ownty-donty sauce, and you shan't touch it," she said.

By skillful manoeuvring he controlled the arrangements, however, saw the syrup prepared, and the apples dropped in. Then Mrs. Hargreave called him.

It did seem to the boy that the lady was never



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so fussy, as if the work in her room was endless; and when she suddenly exclaimed, "What is that burning? I smell burning rags!" he darted out of the room.

Rose was not in the kitchen. He bent over the kettle. Yes, it had caught a wee bit, not much damaged, he hoped, as he lifted it off. He was carefully transporting the sauce from the kettle to a bowl when Rose returned to the room. She was highly offended at his "meddling," as she called it, and demanded the spoon, but Ike had no idea of yielding it.

Just then Mrs. Hargreave called again: "Isaac, Isaac, have you found out where the rags are burning?" and he was obliged to go.

"Don't touch it, please, Rose. If any is scraped from the bottom it will taste," he said as he went out.

Rose said she was very careful, but there was a slight taste to his favorite sauce which Mr. Hargreave discovered immediately. June was too much absorbed in her thoughts to notice it, and

answered her father's rather hasty: "Juniper, I thought you knew how to make apple sauce," with the as hasty: "I am of the same opinion yet, sir."

So Rose and Ike escaped.

That evening June had business with her father.

"Popsydil, didn't Uncle John write that he needed a good clerk?"

"I believe he did, Juniper."

"I have one for him."

"Ah!" Mr. Hargreave elevated his eyebrows slightly. "The latest notion! Ike's getting old, hey?"

"It's a friend. Richard Perkins."

Mr. Hargreave started up.

"I had a school chum by that name. One of the most splendidly built fellows I ever saw. Wonder if this chap belongs to him? Where did you pick him up, June?"

"Haven't picked him up, sir. I'm his sister's friend."

"O! Is he smart, intelligent, well-educated? Your uncle is not easily suited."

June could not answer these questions, so she sought Ike. She found him but little disposed to talk of Dick. He answered her questions as to his abilities and attainments frankly. He had always heard that Dick was a smart man at his own work; he had not much learning, and Ike thought he would not care for much more.

"I should think a good-looking, smart young man would have some ambition," June said, disappointed. "Do you know anything about his father, Ike?"

"Not much."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, miss."

"Was Dick named for his father, do you know?"

Yes, Ike knew that from Bryony.

"Then he must be the son of my father's school friend by that name. What did he die of? Do you know?"

Ike did know, but he hesitated painfully.

"Bryony doesn't like to have it known," he at last replied to her urgency.

"Why! he wasn't hung, or imprisoned?"

June cried out in sudden fear.

"No, miss."

"He didn't kill himself?" she persisted.

"No—that is, not in the way you think. Rum killed him, Miss June."

Ike's voice was subdued and solemn. June turned away, shivering. She did not think then, but it came to her afterwards, that perhaps Dick inherited his father's appetite. Ike's evident reluctance to speak of him confirmed her in this opinion, and thus was suddenly dashed one of Miss Juniper's numerous brilliant schemes.

CHAPTER XI.

PANGS AND THEIR AFTERWARDS.

WINTER was almost over. Granny Thorpe was not the only person on Our Street who rejoiced in the fact. By none is spring looked forward to so eagerly as by the poor. "Late in February now; there can not be much more cold weather," men said; but, as if to defy them, winter saved for this time one of his fiercest storms.

These days and weeks had heard one plea go up from little Bryony's heart and lips: "Dear God, shut up Mr. Jenkins' shop, for Jesus' sake;" and little Stevie, often with her, learned to repeat the petition too. Little Bry remembered that there

was a promise to two joined in one supplication, and so pledged her tiny friend to offer it often and always for "Jesus' sake, 'cause God always says 'Yes,' then."

Bry had not forgotten that little glimpse of Edward Parker's face in Jenkins' saloon, and now she noted, with a trembling heart, that he oftener came around that way from work than heretofore. She never spoke her fears, even to Ike. She would not have had little Stevie know it for the world! but she prayed with greater fervency if possible, and more frequently.

The great snow-storm kept the little fellow in the house for a day or two, then a slight cough detained him yet longer from Bryony's side. He was a very uneasy child under restraint, more human than angelic, perhaps, and kicked out many an ill-humor on the floor. Yet he generally made what he considered amends for all this by kissing his mother, and promising "I'll neber do it no more!"

Poor little fellow! his memory was not much

longer than his nose. One day he chafed more than usual, and was very naughty; but presently sat down in a corner, as if thinking:

"Has Dod dot nenny mamma?" he asked, after a little.

"No," his mother replied.

"Then he don't dot wocked when he's naughty, and dirt his apron?"

"God is never naughty," answered Mary, smiling.

But Stevie took no notice of smile or answer.

"If I was God, an' hadn't nenny mudder, I'd 'ick old Dinkins, I would, and I will, en'way when I get up to papa!" And the small chap doubled up his fists nimbly. He got up and walked to a window, then came back to his mother's side.

"Does my papa dwink?" he asked, soberly.

Mary started and colored.

"Everybody drinks," she said, evasively.

"Not outer old bottles. I dudn't, an' oo dudn't, an' Bry dudn't" — children's questions are not to be evaded — "an' I saw my farder drink outer a bottle."

"Folks always drink medicine out of bottles," said the mother, still avoiding the question.

"Bry tates hers outer tumbel," said the little fellow, stoutly. "'Sides, it's ole nas'y bottle, jes' 'like ole Dinkins has in er winder. It's sick-makers, I know 'tis. Dinkins'll be sut up soon, 'cause Bry an' me we's prayin' to Dedus."

Mary looked down at the curly-headed mite.

"Did Bryony tell you that papa drank?" she asked.

"No, her didn't!" the curly head nodded emphatically. "Her dudn't know en'ting 'bout it. I neber telled her, 'cause her'd be sorry; but I telled Dod."

Mary Parker said no more, but she felt uneasy all the afternoon. She watched her darling narrowly, and his little cough smote her heart. His little cheeks were very red that night, as she sat beside his crib waiting his father's coming. He was very late, and had not been in to supper. His wife met him bitterly:

"You have been in Jenkins' again!" she said.

How can you neglect little Stevie and me so much! You are ruining yourself!"

But Mr. Parker only growled: "Shut up! will you?"

A woman does not always obey implicitly when asked so politely to do a thing. Mary Parker was not yet so well used to harsh words as to receive them quietly. She began to cry, and her husband, somewhat ashamed, tried to extenuate himself.

"You make a great fuss, Mary, over a little whisky. The old doctor told me to take a swallow or two whenever those faint attacks came on, and I've had them pretty often, lately."

"Yes; but you don't stop at a swallow or two. It's a glass or two, and every day at that."

"I work hard," said Mr. Parker, "and if whisky gives me strength when I'm faint, it'll give me more when I'm not. You should be the last to grumble, since it is to earn more for you."

"For old Jenkins, you mean. You don't bring in as much as you used to. O, Edward, even that child notices it. He told me to-day that he saw you drinking."

Edward Parker grew angry. "That's from letting him be so much with that silly brat across the street, making a fool of herself, and of Dick, too! I'll not stand it if he's fool enough to. If she puts any more in that child's head I'll shut her up pretty quick. You needn't let him go over there again."

In vain Mary protested that Bry was not to blame, and repeated what Stevie had said. He would not listen, and, getting heavy and stupid, tumbled into bed. It was hours before his wife slept, and then she was soon roused by a hoarse rattling cough from the crib, the cough that has struck terror to so many loving mother-hearts.

The feverish, flushed face of her darling added to her alarm, yet in vain were all her efforts to arouse her husband from his drunken slumbers. He muttered something about "women's whims," "a little cold," and lapsed immediately into unconsciousness again.

Still the cough rang on the air, and again and again the woman tried to rouse her husband. At

last with success. He got on his feet, and, after a little, half-comprehending, started for the doctor. Alas! when Dr. Fosby arrived it was too late. In less than an hour after his coming little Stevie was dead, and his mother passing from one hysteric fit into another.

All night Widow Grafham and old Nurse Adams worked over the stricken woman, but her husband sat as one stunned. He was beginning to awake from the slumber of months.

Little Bry was restless all that night, troubled all the next morning. From her window she saw Mrs. Grafham, Kiddy and Letty running back and forth, and feared something was wrong. She longed to go forth like others, and inquire what it meant. And at last, unable to bear it longer, she ventured, in spite of the formidable banks of snow.

A passer-by helped her over the street. Widow Grafham saw her coming, and met her at the door. Kiddy helped her tenderly up-stairs, then, when she was seated, they stood and looked at her.

Kiddy Langdon's loving heart sank when her mother was summoned out of the room, and she saw that the sad task of revealing the news to Bryony devolved on herself. She dreaded the first question:

"Is Stevie sick?"

"No." How relieved Kiddy felt even at this little delay.

"Is Mrs. Parker?"

"Yes."

"O, I am glad I came over! I can take care of Stevie. He's always good with me."

"Poor little Bry!" Kiddy stooped and kissed her as she spoke. "Stevie will never want anyone to take care of him again. He's gone to Jesus!" and Bry looked up a moment helplessly in the sympathetic eyes above, and fell fainting.

"It's not 'cause I'm sorry Jesus took him," she said, after sitting with white face and folded hands. "O, no! I'm not sorry Jesus took him, but—but—I loved him so, and I didn't 'spect

it." Ah, little Bry, you are not the first, neither will you be the last, who sorrows, not for their saved, but for themselves.

It was her own little Stevie that lay there, so mute yet so life-like. Tears sprang to her eyes as she kissed his cheek, and asked to see his mother.

Widow Grafham was a little fearful about the result if Bryony should see Mrs. Parker now, just as she had been quieted; but the child would not be refused. "He belonged just to us two; she'd rather have me than anyone else."

Bry was right. The sight of her brought the first tear shed since her boy's death to Mary Parker's eyes.

"O Bry!" she sobbed. "Don't you remember what you said when you first saw him? 'It's so comfortable to have a baby!' and now — now —"

"And now," said little Bry, finishing the broken sentence, with a voice that trembled though it meant to be so brave, "now it's so comfortable to

have an angel!" and she laid her head on Mary Parker's bosom, and cried her fill.

It did them both good. After that Mary could talk more calmly, and told Bry the story of the night before. "And now," she said, wistfully, "do you feel quite sure that he's an angel, Bry?"

"Not 'zactly," Bry confessed. "But something nice enough for heaven, something that only God can make."

Bryony stayed all day with the bereaved mother. Dick dined with Widow Grafham. That night the little girl opened her Bible again to the verse before so strangely dark. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

"It's good for him," she whispered; "but — but — Well, what's his good ought to be mine." Yet, in spite of this true reasoning, Bry cried herself to sleep.

In the days that followed Bryony spent most of her time with Mrs. Parker. The day of the

funeral Edward Parker, finding them together, spoke thus:

"I want you both to know I've quit drinking. I've killed my boy, no doubt. The doctor said he could have saved him if he had been called sooner; if it hadn't been for drink he would have been called soon enough. Well" — with a groan — "perhaps 'twas needed. I'd 'a' killed myself, like as not, and you too, Mary. But I've quit. The cursed stuff hasn't such a hold of me yet but I can break it off. Little Bry, I thank you for teaching Stevie all he knew of heaven. He'd have been saved, I doubt not, without it; but it's pleasanter for the little fellow to be where he's acquainted."

Edward Parker kept his word. Many a day afterwards — sad, lonely days they were, too — Bryony comforted herself in her sorrow, as she saw him enter his door with an unfaltering step, and from a direction opposite to Jenkins' saloon.

"It did work for good," she would say to her-

self, through tears. "It always must, 'cause God says so; but we can't see far, and we get afraid, and don't just believe him. He forgives us, 'cause he's always good, but it must hurt his feelings!"

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CHAPTER XII.

MR. JENKINS' EXIT.

IKE, who had heard of Stevie's death while in the city on an errand, came to see Bryony, and brought a flower-pot, containing a tea-rose, from June, as a token of her sympathy.

On his way thither he heard that Mr. Jenkins was sick, but to Bryony's eager inquiry answered that the saloon was still open.

The news was true. Mr. Jenkins had contracted a severe cold—nothing serious, the doctor said—but he was laid aside for awhile.

It must be confessed that ever since her interview with little Bry, Mrs. Jenkins had been unusually nervous, and hailed this slight sickness

with an alarm which seemed very unnecessary. She talked to her husband quite seriously about his business, and begged him to give it up. He laughed at her, and asked her where she would get her fine silks if he did?

"You are foolish and superstitious, Mary Ann. I gave you credit for more sense than to be disturbed by the words of a child!"

But Mrs. Jenkins *was* very seriously disturbed.

A week passed. The sick man did not rally. On the contrary, his symptoms were aggravated, rather, and again his wife expostulated with him. He was angry now, and bade her be still. "I shall be down-stairs in less than a week. Neither God nor man shall hinder my business," he said. In less than three hours after he was in high delirium. Then his wife closed the saloon and dismissed Sands.

In vain was every remedy applied that skill could devise. A fortnight after Mr. Jenkins was buried, and he had never spoken one rational word since those of his vain boasting.

Bry first heard of his death through Hephzibah. She had come home for a few hours to see her grandmother, and ran over to gossip with our little friend.

"They say, too, that Mrs. Jenkins lays his death all to you," said the thoughtless girl, not dreaming how she wounded the sensitive plant beside her.

Poor little Bry carried those words for weeks, and they grew very heavy, until her heart could no longer bear their burden. She heard that Mrs. Jenkins was about to go to New York, and persuaded Ike, one evening when in the city, to help her again to the saloon door.

Ike stood without the house. A servant conducted Bryony to a room where three ladies sat. The child easily recognized the face of her former visitor, though its beauty was marred by recent sorrow. As for Mrs. Jenkins, she could never forget that child's face. It had haunted her for months.

The two young ladies were her daughters.

She presented them to Bry, and then silently waited to hear her state her errand. But the child's tongue seemed tied. How to introduce her subject she knew not. She looked, in evident embarrassment, from one lady to another; then, tears springing to her eyes, she cried:

"I didn't kill him! O, I didn't want him to die! I never prayed for that!"

Mrs. Jenkins was much moved. "I never supposed you did!" she said.

"But—but they said you blamed me, please, and I couldn't bear it. I only wanted him to stop selling it. I *must* have him stop, but I'd rather he had stopped some other way."

"You cannot kill or make alive—of course I know that."

Mrs. Jenkins spoke with a slow, painful intonation, that smote the child's warm heart.

"No, please; but—but—I hope you'll not blame God. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked—he says so; and he wouldn't have taken that way if—if—there was any other. He knows, marm."

Ah, how true every syllable! Mrs. Jenkins thought of her vain pleadings, her husband's boastful words; but she did not speak, and the child rose to go.

The lady rose, too.

"Perhaps it will give you pleasure," she said, "to know that I have had all the liquor from the saloon emptied into the back bay" — the glad uplifted eyes spoke for Bryony — "and I am going to keep the property until I can sell it to those who will not use it for this traffic," continued the woman.

Her hand was seized warmly, while tears and kisses rained upon it. "He is *such* a God," said Bry.

Down in the hall, the door opened, again the child hesitated a moment.

"You do not blame me for praying?" Ike heard her say.

"No; it was all left you — all left any of those poor victims."

"Then please kiss me."

The woman stooped and gave the desired caress. "You have taught me the power of prayer," she said, "I, who have never prayed. When next you pray let it be for one whose heart is broken."

Then the child went out, and the lady went upstairs; but for days and weeks after, those words kept ringing in her ears: "'He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; he says so.'" "It shall not return unto me void," says God of his word. If you would speak convincingly, reader, speak scripturally. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

That night, Ike Hobson, growing eloquent in prayer, as he was wont, cried: "O, shut them all up, dear Lord, shut them all up. Ten thousand little Brys are lifting helpless hands and cries throughout our rum-cursed land. In pity answer

them, for Jesus's sake." Amen! Amen! O, who will join in the petition? "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

Now that Mr. Jenkins' saloon was shut, Bry had no doubt but her trial was over. Little did she understand the strength of the enemy with which she coped. Her heart grew lighter, her eye brighter; for, aside from the poverty which Dick's habits had brought to his home, had been frequent rough words, coarse oaths, and a breath seldom pure. But all this would be changed now, she was sure.

The rose-tree sent her by Juniper was a great delight to the little one. Back and forth she moved it, from spot to spot of the single window through which the sun entered, that it might catch all its rays, and she watered it faithfully. Many were the sweet words cooed over it, the happy dreams of farm-life it suggested; a real fairy was it in that meagre home.

Then, too, her Bible blossomed to new beauty

constantly. Every verse was a friend. Some such dear old friends, but one day she met a new one—a strange one, too, she thought:

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

Bry read it over and over slowly. She could read very nicely now. Ike helped her a little every time he came in, but this verse puzzled her."

"'Enemy'; that's somebody that hates us and wants to do us harm. Yes, I understand that," she said. "'Comes in like a flood,'" she paused again. "O, yes!" face brightening, "like Noah's; sweeping off everything, covering everything but just God's folks. 'Then the Spirit of the Lord'—the rest of it was very blind to her.

"He'll teach me some day, I know," she said. "Everything means something, and everything grows plain in his time. I 'member about my 'All things' verse. It's all right, 'cause it's something he says."

Dick did keep straight enough for awhile. There was less temptation for him now, since the door he daily passed no longer beckoned him to ruin. Then, too, Mr. Jenkins' death had startled him, and suggested unpleasant thoughts of the future, in view of which he had been so carefully trained.

He had made a great many resolutions to reform. Alas! for the strength of an unregenerate nature! Wedded by birth to sin, its essence is weakness. It is only as man links himself to Deity that he is strong. The appetite Dick Perkins had fostered had grown to a giant's strength, and the whole rum trade of the city had not been buried in Mr. Jenkins' grave.

Sad, indeed, was the day that followed Dick's first coming home intoxicated after the closing of that grave. Bryony lay in the border-land of "Doubting Castle," and "Giant Despair" had iron hands about her heart.

"It's just no use," she sobbed, "no use!" Dear Jesus, if you'd only shut 'em all up, or take every

bit of the like for it out of him! I can't do anything more, O, I can't!"

Poor little Bry! There was a hard pain in her heart, a strange faintness creeping over her whole body. "I can't go out! I can't do anything but wait—and—O, Lord Jesus, it is so hard to wait! I'm sick—sick all over! What *shall* I do?"

She laid her head wearily against the cushion of her chair, and her dropping hand hit her Bible.

"Med'cine!" she cried, a gleam of light shooting across her face, and she opened the book.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood." What sent that passage through her mind just then? "Yes, rum's the enemy, and it's a flood, sure; but—but—I'm God's folks. I'll find it, 'cause I can't 'member the rest. It's in Isaiah, I'm sure."

But she didn't find it. How a verse will evade us sometimes! She got another, instead: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."

"O!" Bryony read it over and over, with dewy eyes, and eager, thirsty lips.

"That's new!" she said. "It was never here before. He sent it just for me, and it's true! How good he is!" And again the head drooped, and the weary eyes, sleepless the night before, closed in refreshing slumber. "He giveth his beloved sleep."

An hour after, Dr. Fosby, coming in, found her thus. He sat a little while gazing upon the thin, pale face.

"She's growing weaker," he said, "and I don't understand it. I'm sure I've hit the right remedy. I believe she thinks too much," noticing the Bible. "There's something on her mind, that's certain. She's too young to read such a book;" and he stooped and gently sought to remove it from her grasp.

Not possible. The eyelids unclosed at the first attempt. She smiled as she recognized her old friend.

"How do you feel this morning?" he asked,

cheerily. "I had a few moments to spare, and thought I'd drop in. Have you any medicine for me, Bryony?"

"I don't know," she said, thoughtfully, "but God has lots. I'm afraid my med'cine isn't worth much. But he gave me the best I ever had this morning. I was very sick; 'most gone."

"'Most gone?" questioningly.

"Yes. The pain was all here," laying her hand on her heart. "But *he* said — the big God, who can't lie, you know — 'I will heal him, and restore comforts unto him' — that's Dick — 'and to his mourners' — that's me. God's comfort is *so* comfortable!"

"I'm afraid you'll go altogether, some of these days, if you read and think so much," said the doctor.

But Bry did not seem to hear.

"*You* never gave sick-makers — rum to folks, when they were sick, doctor?" she asked, suddenly.

The good gentleman seemed a little startled,

perhaps by the suddenness of the question, but he laughed as he said: "What next, you morsel? What put that into your head?"

The child was looking at him with very grave eyes, and he was not exactly comfortable under them.

"That's the way father first took to drink," she said, soberly. "The doctor ordered it once when he was sick, and he liked it better and better, until he forgot to come home one night, and froze in the streets, and — and that's the reason Dick likes it, 'cause father did."

There was quiet for a moment, then the doctor said, a little warmly, as if defending himself: "Perhaps your father would have died if his physician hadn't ordered whisky. A doctor is expected to cure his patients."

"But he didn't cure him, sir. The medicine killed him."

Dr. Fosby looked annoyed.

"He didn't die at once, did he?"

"No, sir. But wouldn't it have been better if

he had? Then it would only have killed one man, the outside one; but it killed both, the one inside as well as the one outside, and — and then there's Dick, you know. He wouldn't have known anything about it; he'd 'a' been in heaven, yet, a sweet little baby."

The shadow of a smile flickered for a moment on the doctor's face.

"You think too much, Bry," he said. "You can't understand these things."

"But God does, please, sir, and he says: 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink.' Isn't it as bad to tell 'em they must take it — everybody minds doctors — and — and I get puzzled, sometimes, to know who God thinks is to blame, father and Dick, or the doctor, or the men who sell it. If they didn't love it they wouldn't buy it, and so no one would sell it; and if the doctor hadn't ordered it for father he wouldn't have liked it. God sent doctors to make folks well — to give 'em med'cine. And that isn't med'cine; it's always sick-makers, and it kills 'em afterwards, kills 'em clear through, so God can't make 'em well."

Dr. Fosby said little more. He had taken as large a dose as he needed this morning. He left a few powders, and inquired, in a hesitating sort of way, of Edward Parker's family.

"They're all well, and — O, you'll be so glad! He isn't going to drink any more! Some doctor told him to take it for his heart, and he began to love it; but he's stopped."

The little enthusiastic eyes were shining up to Dr. Fosby's, but they did not detect his added color. "Yes," he said, "he was very glad!" and Bry smiled. And he *was* glad — more, relieved. He had seen the young man stagger several times, and knew who ordered the whisky.

It was strange how the child's arguments hung to him that day. Strange that an old Bible verse, learned at his mother's knee years ago, followed him constantly: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds."

It is certain he muttered some queer things in his study that night, such as: "Yes, I've prescribed a good deal of it. No, I don't believe it

is a necessity! Hang it! why can't I get that out of my head?" And, finally, closing a book emphatically: "I've given my last whiaky prescription. I've no inclination to be arraigned with rum-sellers!"

"A little child shall lead them."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT SLEW THE DRAGON.

OUR city was in a ferment. Our Street shared it. A religious interest in the city had led to an urgent invitation to the Rev. Herbert Gardenell to visit it, and he had consented. The city hall was to be used for the services, a great chorus choir had been organized, and Mrs. Gardenell's singing, much praised by all who had heard her, and wonderfully used of God, was a chief feature of attraction.

Little Bryony had heard all this through Letty Sawyer, and, always interested in Mr. Gardenell, she longed excessively to hear him.

The afternoon before the first meeting was cold

and windy, as March days are apt to be; but Widow Grafham, at her shop window, noticed two strangers across the street.

"Letty, did you ever see a nobler-looking man? So broad and grand!" exclaimed the old lady, who had a weakness in the direction of well-developed manhood.

Letty's answer was somewhat from the point. "That's the most beautiful lady I ever saw! Mother, I'm sure that's Mr. Gardenell and his wife. They are coming over here! O, I'm so glad! Open the door, mother."

Indeed, the two were crossing directly before the widow's establishment, and were soon comfortably seated in the wee room behind the curtain.

"My wife is a little weary," said the gentleman apologetically, and soon he was gathering, in a very unobtrusive way, a great deal of intelligence about the inhabitants of that locality. He repeated the names of the dealers as if trying to fasten them in his memory, and inquired about the

factory below. Meanwhile Letty was studying shyly the beautiful face of the lady.

"You say Mr. Hudworth keeps the periodical shop just across?"

"Yes, sir. And he's my son Gregory. He is a professor of religion, but is very cold of late. I'm in hopes he'll attend some of your meetings, sir, and get good. Indeed, we all need them. Excuse me, sir; you haven't spoken your name, but Letty generally hits things right, and as soon as she saw you coming she said it was Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell."

The gentleman smiled up into Letty's blushing face.

"I shouldn't wonder if Letty was right this time," he said, and after a little more talk they arose to go.

"You might sit and rest until your husband returns," said the widow, politely, addressing the lady.

But Mrs. Gardenell, thanking her, declined the invitation.

"I saw a pale, child-face at a window opposite," she said. "I think I will call and rest there."

"O, do!" cried Letty, impulsively. "That's little Bry, and she'll be so glad."

The little, pale face alluded to, looked inquiringly into the faces of the strangers, as its owner answered their rap. But she answered eagerly, to the lady's question, "May I come in a while and sit with you?" "O yes, that'll be so comfortable;" and her little crutches went sounding through the hall. So the gentleman departed, and his wife followed Bryony into her room.

"You had better take this chair, it is more comfortable than that," said Bry, pointing to her rocker. But the lady refused the kind offer.

"I shall be more comfortable seeing you in it," she said.

The child settled herself back at this, her eyes literally devouring the woman before her, over the sweet, smiling face, with its shining eyes and ruby lips, and glowing cheeks, the little ripples of

chestnut hair lying beside the smooth brow; over the dress so neat, well-fitting, becoming, the eyes wandered, then back again to the dark eyes, with a long sigh of satisfaction.

"I'm just right," smiled Mrs. Gardenell.

"Yes. It must be so comfortable to be you!"

"It is when I remember that Jesus loves and saves me, and gives me work for him. It isn't so comfortable when I remember my naughty thoughts, quick words, and neglected work."

"O!" prolonged. "I didn't think you could be naughty, you're so comfortable."

"And so human, dear. But what can I do, little Bry, to make you comfortable while I am here?" Mrs. Gardenell had not lost that old, quick way of catching and retaining names.

"O, I'm comfortable," with a little satisfied look about her. "This room is smaller than the other, and not quite so high, but it keeps warm easier. Then the sun comes in through a part of that window a little while every day that it's out, and Miss June sent me the rose-bush. Wasn't she

good? It don't grow very well; that's 'cause it's lonesome for the other plants in Miss June's bay-window at the farm-house. Of course it must miss 'em. But I found some med'cine for it this morning, and" — lowering her voice — "I asked Jesus to please not let it forget to grow, like I did."

There were tears in her beautiful dark eyes, as the lady stretched out her hand impulsively, and took one of Bry's.

"You are very comfortable yourself, dear," she said.

"Yes, I am when folks are sick and want med'cine. I'm Bryony — Bryony Perkins."

"And you know all about the great Doctor and his medicine?" inquired the lady, tenderly.

"O, yes. I've got his medicine book," one little hand taking from its accustomed place beside her the well-worn Bible. "That's where I got the rose-tree's med'cine. 'Consider the lilies, how they grow.' I read it to it, and I think it looks better already. Don't you?"

Mrs. Gardenell only smoothed the little hand in her lap. "Jesus' little lamb!" she said.

"Yes, that's what *he* said. He wrote a letter to the little lambs, and it came to me, so I'm one."

"*Who* wrote the letter?"

"Mr. Gardenell. You know; the man whom God loves, and who preaches to big people and little children. He's coming here to-night and I want to see and hear him. The letter telled all about little Violet, and she said, 'He will save them *now*, he saved me!' I've been Jesus' lamb ever since I heard it."

"And how long ago was that, Bryony?"

"O, ever so long. Mother read it to me. That was 'fore He sent for her, you know."

"*Who* sent for her?"

"Jesus. He sent angels. I didn't see them, but I knew when they came. They didn't take all of her at once, only the speak, and see, and kiss; but I 'spect she's all there now, and"—Bry always said this with a little dry half-sob—

"p'r'aps he'll send for me when Dick gets well, and don't need 'med'cine any more; but I'm afraid he's getting worser."

Little Bry and her companion did not know there was a third party in the room. But Mr. Gardenell, finding his knock unheeded, had followed the voices to the apartment, and stood listening to the last of this.

He drew a chair close to the rocker now, and, lifting the child to his arms, drew her head to his broad bosom.

"Who is Dick, little Bry?" he asked.

There was one swift, upward glance from those little eyes, a timid, questioning look, that seemed to meet its answer in the face above. She smiled back to his tender smile, and answered: "Please, sir, Dick is my daily bread."

The gentleman seemed to understand. "And now he is too ill to earn it?" he asked, gently.

"O, no!" Another rapid, upward glance. "But — but he spends it for — for — sick-makers — whi-whi-whisky!" fairly gasped the child, a

shiver shaking her slight frame as that word, for the first time, escaped her lips. "My med'cine isn't big enough for him now. Jesus shut up Mr. Jenkins' saloon, but he goes somewhere else. I'm 'most 'scouraged, though mother told me not to be. She said, 'There's nothing too hard for God.' I s'posed he wanted me to help him a little, sir, and so he left me when he took mother, and I've tried; but — but it's no use!" And really, our brave little Bry was hiding tears on Mr. Gardennell's coat.

It might have been the soothing touches of his gentle hand that made them flow so freely, possibly the tightening of his loving arms about her frame, or the tenderness of his voice.

"O, yes, it is use. Jesus can save him, Bry."

She wiped her eyes bravely, and looked up. "It'll take the whole of him to do it. You don't begin to know how bad he's got it, sir."

"No. But he knows, and he is able. It takes the whole of Jesus to save any sinner, it did to

save you and me. But he will save Dick, and save the whole of him."

"O, how comfortable that is!" There was not a particle of doubt in little Bry's voice—it bubbled over with its joy. "*When* will he do it, please?"

"When we ask and believe. He says, in his book, '*Now* is the accepted time.' Shall we ask him now?"

How wonderful it was to have prayer breathed above her head! to hear God talked to so familiarly, yet so reverently. The first words that burst from those little lips were:

"It must be 'most as comfortable to be you as to be Mr. Gardenell, sir. Did you ever hear the lady sing?"

"Yes," smiling.

"And him preach?"

"Yes."

"I thought you must. He's *very* good, sir?"

"He might be improved, but he means to do right."

"Do you think he could help Dick?"

"If God would help him to."

"O, yes! it's all God."

"All God, but he uses men sometimes."

"I hope he'll use him or you, sir. P'raps he'll go to the meetings, if the lady's going to sing."

"She is."

"O!" delight and longing unspeakable in face and voice, "I'll tell him!"

Then the lady's gentle hand was laid for a moment on her husband's arm.

"Herbert, little Bry can go to-night, I know, if you send a carriage for her."

"Then little Bry shall go, Ennie."

Little Bry heard, but her tongue failed her utterly; even her old stand-by, "comfortable," forgot to appear. There was a terrible something in her throat which would not up at her cough, and her eyes felt strangely. She turned away her head and winked fast, fearful that again she should surrender to tears.

Bryony followed the two forms with her eyes as long as they were in sight, and sighed when they faded from view.

"Them must be God-kisses," she said — for she was full of strange fancies — "like those Adam and Eve learned in the garden before they sinned;" and she put up one thin hand and patted the cheek they had pressed, much as if she thought by so doing she caressed them.

No amount of coaxing would induce Dick to accompany his sister that evening, but she was ready when the hack appeared.

Mrs. Ezekiels had been pressed into service, and had hunted up a hood which fitted Bry better than her mother's, and also an extra shawl.

The hall was lighted brilliantly. The vestibule was one blaze of light, and the post-lamps made all those about the sidewalk plainly visible. Bry, unused to such sights, looked from the coach window, forgetful of pain, her heart throbbing with joy.

It was not the driver's hand that opened the

hack door, or his face that met Bryony's; but O! such a radiantly handsome one, with its glowing complexion, brilliant black eyes, white teeth and curling hair. It was Eddie Campbell, and, as the lamp-light fell full upon him, Bry gave a little cry of admiration. Yes, Eddie inherited all of his father's perilous beauty, as well as his tender heart, fascinating manners and musical voice. Little Bry yielded her heart to him that first moment as naturally as the flower opens its breast to the sun. How fraught with danger and responsibility is this power to win hearts!

"This is little Bryony? Uncle Herbert sent me to care for you. And Dick did not come!" disappointedly. "No matter; my arms are as strong as his," lifting her gently; "and after I have found you a nice seat, I will go and hunt for him. Do you know where I shall find him?"

Little Bry was nestling to his bosom as if it was her natural resting-place, as she whispered: "No, but Jesus does, and I'll ask him to show you."

"Why! so he can; and you are just what mamma said, and I love you already."

Letty Sawyer opened her pretty gray eyes as Bry was seated by her handsome escort. "Why, there's Bry! who is that with her?" she whispered to her husband, but he was no wiser than herself.

It was a night of marvels to our little friend. *Her* gentleman Mr. Gardenell! She could hardly believe her eyes, and she could scarcely see the lovely singer through her tears. Then the text! How wonderful that it should be her puzzling verse, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood," etc. Isa.: 59, xix.

The child listened with a strange, delicious sense of comfort creeping over her. God would come to her rescue at this climax of woe. O, a hard place looked comfortable to-night, since it warranted his assistance. Bry hardly knew that Mr. Gardenell's own hands tucked her into the coach, hardly knew how she reached home. The last hymn sung by that wonderful voice was

still echoing in her soul, "O, who will come home to-night?"

Eddie Campbell did, indeed, find Dick, yet Dick did not attend the meeting. At a street-corner, where the young gentleman was addressing a motley crowd, Dick and his companions halted. Every word spoken by the stranger struck a chord in the boy's heart, yet he did not accept the public invitation given to attend the hall meeting, nor yet the private one urged so earnestly afterwards, for Eddie, with intuition, fastened on him.

He listened to his sister's glowing account with little apparent interest, confessed he had seen a young man answering to her description of Mr. Campbell, who was inviting others to the meetings, but did not tell her that his rough refusal to attend had turned back on himself, and made his evening uncomfortable.

Next day Campbell visited Dick at his work. His pleasant, familiar ways won on the boy in spite of himself, yet he sturdily refused to attend

the meetings. But men who refuse their fellows do not always refuse God. The prayers of these Christian workers, and of little Bry, must be answered. Dick was there Sunday night.

Of course he didn't intend to be, but some of the fellows proposed it for a change, and, though he objected at first, he finally yielded when accused of squeamishness.

The arrow was prepared for his heart, and a way opened for his obedience. In the vast crowd he was separated from all his companions. The text was from Luke: 18, xvi. "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Every word of the sermon meant Dick, he was sure of that. He grew fidgety and uncomfortable, but was hedged in too securely to get out. He tried not to listen. In vain. The Spirit of the Lord had lifted a standard. The sweat started to his brow as he struggled with the spirit of the Almighty. And when those interested were

urged to repair to the ante-room rather than go out, he groaned more than once.

Yet he did intend to go out immediately—he yet hoped to escape. It was that sweet, tender hymn that had moved his sister's soul so profoundly that drew him at last. So God multiplies his agencies to draw a faltering soul.

"It must come sometime," he said half aloud. "He's bound me long enough. If I can't get the best of him now when I'm young and gritty, why I can't, certain, when I'm old and weak. Here goes, Dick Perkins; if you're man enough you can do it."

For more than two hours Dick, with Mr. Gardnell and his wife beside him, battled the tempter of souls.

"I always knew the old fellow had hold of me, but I didn't know it was such a death-grip, sir," he said, at last. "I tell you, it seems as if one of us must die before we get through, and I'd about as lief die as give in now I've started to beat the old coon."

He didn't give in. That night a victorious Christ was throned in Dick Perkins' heart, and the Rum Dragon lay dead. There were at least three hearts in our city which heard and obeyed the Saviour's request, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep."

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CHAPTER XIV.

DICK'S STAR IN THE ASCENDANT.

PERHAPS I ought to say a word right here about our friend Jetty Blake, who seems to have been somewhat neglected, lately, though not intentionally. Having removed to another portion of the city she naturally did not appear so often in Cur Street; especially after Ike left it, for Jetty had a very tender regard for Ike, however her conduct at times refuted such a thought.

She had grown in these years to a tall, slender girl, very pretty and conceited. She lived out at service now, and put on airs and clothes as nearly like those of her young mistress as possible. She dropped in, occasionally, to pay a visit to Bryony,

always inquiring of Ike; but as the two girls had very little sympathy of sentiment, her departure always gave the little invalid relief; for Jetty found fault and grumbled to such a degree, that her going was like the removal of a dark cloud.

Jetty was altogether astonished at the "New Dick" she had found upon her last visit to her crippled friend; but she had no sort of an idea of "what ailed him," as she expressed it. The sweet revival influences that had pervaded the city the two weeks of Mr. Gardenell's stay had not touched her. She had attended one or two meetings from curiosity, but the scene was incomprehensible, the preaching Latin and Greek; and her only concern was that no acquaintance should see her there, and report her presence to her Catholic mother.

Nevertheless, rich had been the harvest, and, among others, Edward Parker and his wife, and Ellice Mason, our dressmaker, had been saved.

We have said little of Ellice heretofore, but she certainly deserves further notice. From the first

she had shown a kindly interest in little Bry (not to say her brother); and as to Dick Perkins, perhaps no girl in the world had ever interested him so much. The young man was scarcely conscious of his preference, however, until after the new experience which came to both. Several times they walked home from the hall together (she occupied rooms over Hudworth's), and Dick began to look on her through new eyes. She was a pretty, timid girl of nineteen summers, with a modest face and drooping curls. A face not remarkable for anything in particular, but very pretty, all in all.

Little Bry had become very dear to Mr. Gardnell and his wife. They parted from her regretfully, but her sorrow was somewhat modified on learning that Mr. Campbell was to remain awhile longer.

Even so. Eddie Campbell, with his natural impetuosity, had fallen desperately in love, as he supposed, with Ellice Mason's pretty face, and was firm in his resolution to remain and prosecute

his suit. In vain Mr. Gardenell and his wife remonstrated, urging his short acquaintance; he would not listen to reason, and reluctantly at last they departed without him.

The gay, glad boy seemed very happy in his new love. He soon found a way to become acquainted with the object of his regard, and in less than two weeks had proposed to the pretty dressmaker.

Poor Ellice! What could she say but "yes" to a minister-to-be? Of course she must. But she was sorely frightened at her situation, quite sure she could never fill the station to which she seemed called, and not very sure that she loved the individual to whom she had pledged herself.

But Eddie seemed quite happy enough for two, and reported his betrothal to Bryony, together with the news of his immediate departure to join "Uncle Herbert" now that his object was consummated. It was not strange that Bry told the whole story to Dick, as no stricture had been laid

upon her; and perhaps it was not strange that Dick took the news as a personal insult, and did not see Ellice after that when they met, a way of procedure which hurt the maiden sorely.

The next month was one of trial for the poor girl. She looked at Dick through tearful eyes, and cried herself to sleep every night, yet answered dutifully, as best she could, Eddie Campbell's glowing letters, nor noticed that the ardor of his epistles waned continually. Eddie certainly was not proud of his affianced's penmanship and spelling.

Bryony saw something was wrong. Ellice did not run in so often to see her, looked troubled when she did, and Dick's frowning brows, whenever the young girl was in sight, did not argue pleasantly. "Dick never speaks to me now," said Ellice, through tears, to Bry, one day. "I'm sure I don't know how I offended him!" And Dick declared he was not offended when Bryony questioned him, but still he grew daily more restless, and found himself, one night, he hardly knew how, before Ellice's door.

Ellice seemed very much confused at seeing him, blushing and stammering as she invited him in, and offered him a chair.

"I want no chair," he said sternly, glancing about the prettily furnished room. "I only want to know if you are engaged to Edward Campbell."

Ellice admitted timidly that she was.

"Then you have perjured yourself — you know you have!" he cried, hotly. "You do not love him!"

"He did not ask me if I loved him!" sobbed Ellice.

"Didn't ask you if you loved him? like the sap-head! And you — what did you promise to marry him for, when you knew you loved me?"

Dick was very assertive — seemed very sure of his ground. Ellice did not refute him.

"He asked me to!" she sobbed.

"And you couldn't say no!" hotly.

"He's a minister, you know," said the girl, defensively.

"And a man — nothing more, I reckon. A minister needs his wife's love as much as any other man, I take it."

He stopped and looked at her. She was peeping at him through her curls.

"What *can* I do?" she asked, piteously.

"Write to him and tell him you made a mistake. He is honorable; he will release you."

"O, I can't! and he a minister!"

"Well, don't. Cheat him and yourself!"

Hot-headed Dick was half-way through the door.

She called him back.

"O, Dick! Dick! don't be angry!" she plead.

"Come back! please do."

Dick thrust his head through the door.

"Will you write to him?"

"O, I dare not!"

"Then I won't come back!"

And he went down the stairs and out, slamming the door after him, and Ellice threw herself upon the lounge, sobbing hysterically.

Perhaps Edward Campbell was in as sore a strait as Ellice Mason. Certain it is that one month with her senseless, loveless scrawls had quite cured him of his love-fever. He hated to acknowledge this to Mr. Gardenell, yet, with his temperament, it was quite impossible to keep it secret. So one day it all came out.

"Dear Uncle Herbert, what shall I do?" he asked, sadly. "I dread to pain the girl. I do not see how I can honorably break the engagement, and yet how can I marry her?"

Kind Uncle Herbert did not tell him then that these considerations should have been weighed before his entanglement; he said simply, "Go have a talk with mamma, Eddie; I think she can help you."

It proved a long talk, from which the young man came out with a sober face, and red eyes. He went immediately to his uncle's side, and laid his hand on his arm.

"Uncle, dear uncle, I thank you," he said, his voice trembling with emotion. "It has been hard

for me, hard for me, not easy for you, but I am decided; there is but one thing left for me to do. Give me your blessing, your prayers. Mine is a hard task. If I had but heeded your advice, she might have been spared this pain."

"You do not go to-night, my boy?" tenderly.

"Yes, uncle. I dare not delay."

"Then God go with you—and he will! Right is God's side. It will be better for her in the end, be sure."

It was a troubled face that appeared at Ellice Mason's door the night after this conversation. A handsome, but distressed face, whose pain was not relieved by noticing the traces of tears on her face, for he remembered an unanswered letter in his pocket.

Ellice set him a chair, but the young man did not sit down. He must speak at once.

"Ellice, poor child," he said excitedly, "you have been weeping, and I fear I will but add to your sorrow; but believe me, not willingly. In-

deed, I hate myself. I would rather suffer any torture than make this confession, if I were not sure that by withholding it I should wrong you. I have made a mistake, Ellice. I fear I do not love you enough to make you happy as my wife —"

She was looking at him through large, astonished eyes, comprehending never a word until he reached that last sentence. A gleam of light passed over her face.

"Can you — will you release me, Ellice?"

"O, Mr. Campbell! do you mean it! I am so glad!"

Did Eddie quite understand? Was she as glad to break her chains as he himself? She, the thought of whose sorrow had tortured him almost beyond bearance! O man! strange man! Edward Campbell was surely most glad to know he had not power to wound this young heart, yet there was something that clouded his handsome face as he walked back to the depot.

Bryony was informed, quite early the next

morning, by the little dress-maker herself, that she wasn't going to marry Mr. Campbell, after all.

Bry was very much astonished.

"Why, Ellice, I hope you haven't hurt his feelings! He told me he loved you!"

"Yes, but he made a mistake! He said so."

"And did you make a mistake, too, Ellice?"

"O, no! I never loved him, and I never said I did."

The little seamstress was looking out of her window that evening, not watching for Dick, of course, but he saw her, and smiled.

"May I come up?" he ventured, and she nodded assent, and blushed as she opened the door to him.

"Well, 'all things work together for good.' He never makes mistakes," sighed Bryony, when, a few days later, Ellice whispered, "I'm going to be your own sister, Bryony!"

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CHAPTER XV.

LETTY.

ANOTHER year had nearly passed away,
and again autumn days were tinged with
winter frost: but few were the alterations on
Our Street.

There had been "happenin's," as old Nurse
Adams would have said, but they did not much
change the current of affairs. Indeed, did you
ever think how little does anything? The death
of a child, the anguish of a broken heart, the
failure of a life-work, but ripple the surface of
life's sea; and those whose lives have been most
abundant and fruitful, but cause in death a few
exclamations, the cessation of an hour or two's

work — possibly twenty-four — a dropping sigh or tear, and then the tide of life rushes on again with renewed velocity, as if to make up for the break.

Yet God notes when a sparrow-wing flutters, cares when a child sighs, in his greatness gathers up our littleneases, and sympathizes with our faintest pang. Would that humanity might learn the secret of true greatness — burden-bearing.

And God, by his Spirit, had been brooding over Our Street.

In Bryony's home and heart reigned peace unspeakable, since Dick was saved. A faith unshaken in "He says so." Juniper Hargreave came often to sit at her feet, and the rose-bush had several companions. Then, too, Bryony had spent a day at the marvellous farm-house, a day in the warm, bright summer time, a day never to be forgotten.

Letty Jawyer had another little one given to her arms, a little girl; and, frail yet — though the baby was six months old now — she came often to

talk with the little cripple, whose words were always full of hope and comfort; for bright, light-hearted Letty was rather despondent.

Ike had been given his opportunity to learn farming, and had done well. The thought that they could get along without him now never entered the minds of the occupants of the farmhouse. His grandmother was very feeble, increasingly so, but she never wanted, though her hands refused to labor as they were wont. Her boy was kind and attentive, coming in to do up little chores several times a week, and yet, with all his work, managing to learn very much from the books to which his master gave him free access. He had grown broader and taller—he would never be a giant—and had an air of culture about him remarkable when you consider all his circumstances.

Times were dull in our city, especially in that branch of business in which Kiddy Langdon and her mother were engaged. The widow had been very poorly for months, and was much worried

about the protracted weakness of her baby, her Letty.

Poor old Widow Grafham! In her uneasiness she seemed at times almost to catch sight of the cloud hovering above her home. But she was determined not to see, and rallied her child and herself, as if of our will, our assumed cheerfulness, ever evaded fate!

Winter settled in. November, December, January; then, suddenly—very suddenly, they thought, though she had been ailing so long—Letty was prostrated by fever. Typhus, in a very malignant form, the good doctor pronounced it, and shook his head gravely; but he hoped—they all hoped—she would rally. How could death feed on anything so fair, as dear, sweet-faced Letty Sawyer?

She was delirious from the first, and her ravings wrung the hearts of those whose idol she was, and soon it was thought best to send for Becky.

Who can describe the sensation coming to one with the sudden news of a dear one ill, and far

removed from us? With a heart full of forebodings, yet full, as well, of sweet assurance of a brother Christ at hand, Becky took the midnight train from Boston.

All the long ride—so long to-night, never so long before—she wrestled with some unseen power. The news that had struck deepest terror to her heart was not that Letty was so sick, but that for some time past her mind had been wandering; for in the self-same hour had come her mother's letter, written days before, and the telegram not an hour old.

"You can have her, O my Saviour, but she cannot, shall not live insane!" she said over and over again, that weary night. "Nay, thy promises are sure! 'The prayer of faith *shall* heal.' *God's shall!* I will not let thee go. Beside her ravings shall ascend my pleadings, nay, demandings. Thou canst not deny thyself, and it is written."

O! agonizing was the struggle never suspected by the strangers that passed her. How truly are

our lives ours! How little do we really know of each other! Who of those passengers imagined the awfulness with which that pale-faced woman's soul was wrestling with powers omnipotent? But the victory was assured; He abideth faithful. The last tremor of fear had faded from Becky Cartwright's heart ere the iron horse dashed into the depot, and her hand was clasped by Mr. Langdon's.

Such a home! such a home! Unrest was in every heart, on every face. Amid them all Becky alone was quiet, except, perhaps, Mr. Sawyer, the sick woman's husband; but his was the stillness of despair, Becky's the quiet of a heart anchored to Almightyness.

Letty did not recognize her sister. She had called for her repeatedly in her delirium, but neither look nor word signified any realization of her presence after she came. But Becky cared little after she heard the word her ears were strained to catch fall through the parched lips, "Jesus." "O, word of words! Refreshment,

rest, strength to do, bear anything lay in it. Becky was armor-proof to anguish after that whispered word assured her that even the delirium of fever had not robbed her darling of the felt presence of her Lord.

The end was not long delayed after the sister's arrival. Saturday night the telegram reached Becky; early Monday morning, ere the day broke, the gates of paradise unlocked to Letty. She had no terrible struggles after Becky's coming, no wild hours. A quietude, which was heaven in comparison with the days before, had settled upon her. O, what a God was Becky Cartwright's!

The church, of which Letty had been long a member, had just parted with a much-loved pastor. He who now filled the pulpit was a comparative stranger. Mrs. Grafham had yearned for the familiar voice she had learned to love, to breathe a prayer over her dying one, and she was not denied. Called to the city for that one Sabbath, and hearing of Letty's illness, the dear man sought her bedside.

That scene will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The quiet Sabbath afternoon, the unconscious sufferer, the tearful household, the stricken, wondering servant of God, to whom that old, wan face, last seen so round and fair, seemed inexplicable.

"Letty! Letty! Letty!" the mournful tenderness of his tone gathering pathos with each syllable. "Letty! Letty! Letty!" Then, with an upward movement of his hands, the closing of his eyes, he said, "Let us talk to God!" and they did.

O, it was thrillingly pathetic, very fitting, wonderfully soothing, that well-loved voice, ushering in that well-loved soul to heaven! But its familiar tones elicited no notice from the sick one. Not gone yet, quite; not yet inside heaven. But her feet lingered about its vestibule, the veil had fallen between. Here, and there, between this world and that—Letty was no longer of us!

Beautifully, quietly, she passed away, in the early morn, her sisters and brother about her. Her

mother, in an adjoining room, held the little babe which would nestle to no other bosom. Becky, with fascinated eyes and breath abated, watched as the tide ebbed. Yes, it was beautiful! Those gray eyes—those great gray eyes—large and unearthly, the quiet breathing, softer than any babe's on his mother's breast, lengthening imperceptibly, until, when it ceased, they knew it not.

Five words repeated themselves over and over, in Becky Cartwright's mind. "Only a step to Jesus." O, such a little step! O, such an envied step it seemed just then!

The husband's hand closed the white lids over the soulless eyes, Gregory turned away with a strange choking in his throat, Kiddy kissed the frozen lips, and Becky whispered, as she took a long, long look at the face of this, her childhood's idol, the companion of her riper years, "Good-night, Letty; we'll meet again in the morning!"

Shadowed days, a funeral, then the selling out of Widow Grafham's shop. How could she tend

it, and care for those motherless babes? and who else could tend them but she? Who else should? Becky still remained, packing, hunting for a house, and now and again taking Kiddy's place across the bay. All dreaded the hour when she must go. And — was she mistaken, or did her mother's eyes follow her with a more fearful tenderness, as if she, too, might be snatched from her? She was the last of Abel Grafham's children. A drunkard's offspring seldom have long lease of life.

But Becky must go home soon, and, indeed, she was scarcely needed now, for a cottage had been hired, the household stuff arranged in it, and the family were spending their last night together at Gregory's. Kiddy was very weary to-day, so Becky took her place again across the bay.

The afternoon seemed very long; there was but little trade. She shut up the shop that evening earlier than usual, and prepared to go home. There were but few passengers to-night in the horse-car, and Becky felt glad of that, somehow, as she seated herself.

It was a dull night. Not altogether devoid of stars, but they were few, and Becky felt the ride chill and dreary. She pressed her face to the car-window, and noted listlessly, what she had noted so often before, on cheerier rides, the lights twinkling through far-away windows across the bay.

No houses were visible, even in outline, only the tiny lights, each separate light a home, she had thought, and thought now. But in those other days the thought had brought joy with it, for was not every home, in fact, a tiny light sending its ray to brighten earth? To-night she only shuddered. The word, so sweet to mortal ears, was agony just now. Home! How could she imagine home here without Letty? Home! at the best 'twas but a broken one.

"A broken home!" She whispered the words over, her voice pathetic with its thought. How many of those homes across the bay were broken ones? And yet — they still sent out their light!

Was not that the saddest thought of all? they must live on without her!

She closed her eyes. She could not bear those twinkling lights just then. Unconsciously she raised her face up with her heart, and cried to infinite Pity for sympathy. Her opening eyes met the stars. They came to her, just then, as lights from other homes, across the deep blue vault of heaven — homes unseen, not even outlined to her vision, dimmed as it was by the clouds and mists of time, circumscribed by her mortality.

"Homes broken here, but mended there, never more to be broken!" There was joy unspeakable in the thought that pain had brought to birth and fruition. Heaven took an added beauty in that hour — it seemed more like home with Letty there!

Kiddy met her at the door with questionings as to the shop, but, meeting the wistful longing of her eyes, asked her, instead: "What now, Becky?"

"O, nothing; only I am getting homesick!" Becky made answer; and Kiddy did not even dream of what she meant.

Mrs. Grafham had been coaxed into a little sleep; the babies were quiet, Mr. and Mrs. Langdon conversed together. Becky longed for some one in sympathy with her mood, and, slipping out of the back door, sought little Bry.

She found the child alone in the dark, her eyes fixed on the stars, as she loved to sit. She greeted Becky with a smile, and, looking up, said: "They are all out to-night. Mother's, and Violet's, and Stevie's, and Letty's. O, Mrs. Cartwright, it 'most seems like home up there!"

So Becky took the little hands in hers, and, sitting down, told her of her thoughts that night. From this they were led to God's wonderful love and mighty resources, to the worlds of which these little stars testified, until at length Bry, with a long-drawn breath said, "God and you know everything, Becky!"

Becky smiled, yet she sighed, too. "God knows

all," she said, "and I shall know because he says so. 'Then shall I know even as also I am known.' We have only the beginnings here, the wisest of us; but the threads gather in our hands which, drawing upwards, shall open to perfect vision. Bryony, I grow homesick, sometimes, for the land of all knowledge."

"But, Mrs. Becky, you'll enjoy that land so much the more, because you've missed it so here," sighed Bry.

"Yes, but I grow impatient sometimes."

"I know. I used to, when mother first went."

"Well, how did you manage? You missed her very much?"

"Yes; but — Bry's 'buts' were all rainbows — 'but God and the angels didn't miss her. If someone must, 'twas better me than them.'"

"And that made you content?" continued Becky, longing to draw her out.

"Comfortable, Mrs. Becky. Not just content, at first."

"And you never thought that God could have taken you both, and so no one would be lonesome?"

"God couldn't, or he would. His time is always the right time, Mrs. Becky, isn't it? Then you forget Dick. He couldn't live without either of us, and if only one could go there where it's so comfortable, I'd rather mother should, you know."

Becky kissed the pale face tenderly.

"Bryony," she said, "those stars up there are great worlds, but they don't light this room as a candle would. A small light, brought near, is worth a thousandfold the same radiance afar off. I envy you, my dear child. You are but a rush-light, perhaps, but the world is so much the brighter for your shining, that I do not wonder our Father spares you to it."

Bry smiled cheerily.

"All things *do* work together for good!" she said. "It's nice to enjoy things when we get

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CHAPTER XVI.

HOW IKE PROPOSED.

"THE valley of the shadow of death!" The shadow all falls on this side—on the left. There is no shade there—our loved ones bask in light. The sun which brightens the sky, sifting through the tree-boughs, makes light and shadow, yet it all is light. We speak of God's goodness and severity. It is all called but goodness on the other shore. Falling through earthly medium, his tender love takes shades of darkness, but its heart is always radiant. Blessed are they who "abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

But O! how dark, how deeply dark, how mysteriously dark, was this affliction to Widow

Grafham. "Take that young life and leave this old shattered hulk!" she said. All Becky's letters said, "Look up, mother! look up!" and she tried to follow her advice. But the skies were black with clouds, or her eyes were blinded with tears, and life was very burdensome. Yet she had to live. She did not doubt God's goodness, but the heavy weight would not off her heart. Would it ever lift? She did her duty by the children—indeed, she lived in them, and so a few years passed by.

Then dear old Granny Thorpe passed away. Beulah took Hepzy's place as under nurse, while Hepzy took a higher place in the same family she had served so faithfully.

Poor old Ezekiels died, too—rum-killed. His wife still worked hard to keep her brood together, but with greater comfort than in other days, for she had tested the "rest" preached to her by little Bry years ago.

As for Ike Hobson, he still clung to the Hargreaves' farm, but he was getting restless. Bry

said, and perhaps she was right, "that there was something inside of Ike bigger than he could get out, but it must come some day, or kill him."

He studied every spare moment. Night after night found him absorbed, and always in books of weight. Now that he had really no one but himself for whom to provide, he bought books with his earnings, books without expensive bindings, but with solid teachings, among which books on physiology and anatomy were predominant.

Meanwhile his admiration of Juniper had grown powerful. She was the same sweet, erratic June as of old. A little more womanly and dignified by spells, always charmingly naive. It was fully decided at last (since Mrs. Hargreave gained strength daily) that June should attend a seminary for several years; and Ike, knowing this, trembled at thought of his loss, rejoiced at the thought of her gain.

There had been a baby boy added to the inhabitants of the house, a boy "resembling Popsydil," June said, which fact, of course, secured

him a large place in her favor, and exalted his mother also, unconsciously. June went so far as to pat her cheek, sometimes, and to say very — very occasionally, "Mamma Maria."

Mr. Hargreave's nephew, Harold Hargreave, had been visiting the family during the fall. He was a tall, handsome, well-developed young man, and after Ike discovered that Miss June admired his figure so much, a strong desire to grow big took possession of him. Indeed, he *must* grow big, and quite decided he should. How? That was the question he tried to solve.

Ike was but a boy yet, and after long deliberation he hit upon a plan. Daily, now, when quite sure he had the barn to himself, he hung by his hands from a beam, then, catching his feet under an arrangement below, with a sudden upward spring caught by two hand-rests arranged above the beam, thereby giving himself a good stretching. This exercise was alternated with that of catching his feet on the beam and his hands below. If Ike had been preparing him-

self for a public circus actor he could hardly have practised more sedulously. He measured himself, often, by a notch in the wall of his room, and fancied he gained a little.

One morning Ike had just got safely swung, head downward, when Miss June suddenly presented herself.

"Isaac Paul Hobson, what *are* you doing!" she cried. "Are you preparing yourself for the circus? You'll run off every grain of sense you possess at the ends of your hair!"

And Isaac Paul suddenly gained his feet, with a face all of whose color was not induced by his exercise.

He had nothing to say for himself, so June proceeded:

"What were you doing?"

"Stretching myself."

"Stretching yourself! Well, I should think so! I suppose this is another specimen of your stretching," producing a book. "Aunt Myra found this while hunting for eggs this morning. I thought perhaps you'd know who owned it."

Indeed, Ike did know. It was his own precious property. He put out his hand eagerly.

"I've examined it," said June, "and it's full of horrible skeletons. I really think, Ike, you must be rubber, or all your stretching would ruin you."

She loved to tease him a little. If her words left any sting now it was swept away when shortly afterward he overheard her warm defense of him to Aunt Myra.

"It is no use, auntie. God doesn't make the distinctions we do. He may see that Ike is fitted for such studies. Station has little to do with brains, and Ike has enough brains for a couple of such small chaps. Thought is like yeast—he'll rise yet. If it had been gunpowder he'd have been blown up long ago."

Yet Miss Juniper's theory and practice did not always agree.

The winter had opened with quite a round of gayety. June, largely relieved from household cares, as Aunt Myra had taken up her abode in

the farm-house since the new advent, attended several parties, more to please her father than herself.

"They're so namby-pamby," she said secretly, to Ike. "I hate stiff, starchy ways, and loose silly ways; I fear I wasn't made of party stuff."

Mr. Hargreave himself accompanied his daughter to one of these entertainments, a young gentleman the next time, while again she ordered Ike to drive her, on the next occasion, to the gathering, and asked him to see her home.

"Don't bring the horse, Ike; put him up," she said, in her little dictatory way. "I want to walk when I'm so heated. It gives me the chills to ride. Come early; I want to cut the evening short. I'm determined not to like these things."

She stood before him in her party dress as she spoke, the very embodiment of loveliness. He doubted if her equal would be there that night, and almost longed to be present and witness her supremacy.

When he called for her, some hours later, he

was ushered into a little room from which he caught a glimpse of the gay throng. A handsome face was bending close to June's, a face moustached, and flushed with admiration. Ike felt a strange thrill at his heart as he looked on.

She came immediately on hearing he had arrived, the moustached gentleman still beside her. In vain he urged his company upon her, however. She had an escort, she laughingly declared, apparently unconscious of the look of vexation and scorn that passed over the gentleman's face as he took in at a glance Ike's humble appearance.

"Why should you be dependant on a servant when a gentleman offers you his escort?" he said, in a tone that reached Ike's sharp ears.

"I think that is the title you assumed but a few moments since, 'My humble servant,' did you not?" laughed June. "There is small choice in servants, only I prefer one tried and true. Good evening, Mr. Evans."

Ike smiled, and, strange he should, referred to it as they walked home.

"Most any young lady would have chosen such an escort," he said.

"I'm not 'most any young lady,' I'm myself," she said, half pettishly. "How I hate that fellow's silly talk."

Then, somehow or other, he never could tell how, Ike spoke of his love to her. He had fully intended to do this sometime, not that he felt sure of its warm reception, but that he wished to confess his passion.

His words were bold and strong, though they were not many. They were just the ventage of his heart. They would not have been uttered then had not his heart been too full to hold them.

"Ike!" The little lady stopped in her amazement and drew her hand from his arm, where it had lain. "Ike" — her voice full of concern — "I hope this has not come of reading that yellow-covered book I saw you devouring the other day?"

Those silly novels are not fit for any sensible person to read, and they are full of nonsense about boys falling in love with their masters' daughters. Don't read them, Ike, they'll spoil you."

She resumed her walk and his arm as she spoke.

"I never read one in my life!"

"Didn't you? Then where did you get such a notion! You know I couldn't possibly marry you! It ain't to be expected, our circumstances and educations are so different."

Marry him! The words startled Ike. He had not dreamed of that.

"I didn't ask you to marry me, Miss June," he said, quickly.

"Well—but—of course you meant it. That is what it amounts to, isn't it?"

"I don't know. I wished to confess, that's all. I did not ask or expect your love in return. Love is spontaneous. I wanted you to know you possessed mine."

"What a funny fellow you are! what a provoking fellow! Tell a girl you love her, but don't wish her love in return! I don't know of any other young man who would do such a thing, who would even 'confess,' as you call it, under your circumstances."

"I didn't say I did not wish for your love; and, Miss June, I am not 'any other young man.' I am myself."

Ike had no idea of playing on June's late words, but she recognized them and laughed.

"Well, Ike, you are a good boy. I admire you very much," she said. "I don't really love you — not that way, you know; and I'm sorry — no, perhaps I am not really sorry, but I ought to be — that you love me so much. But you'll forget it as you grow older. You're nothing but a boy now."

Then they walked on in silence.

"I have not hurt your feelings, Ike? I don't want to, but I had to speak the truth," said June, almost timidly, as they halted at the door.

"O no! you have not hurt me. I knew how you would receive it, and I would rather have the truth always. Thank you, Miss June, and God bless you."

And Ike opened the door and held it for her to pass in.

Her father discovered tears in her eyes as she clasped his neck a moment after.

"What is the matter with my bird? Is she sick?"

"No, Popsydil, but I have enough of parties. Please don't make me go again. The boys are all fools, and think one girl can marry half of them. Why can't masculines have a little sense, I wonder?" and then she laid her head on his bosom and sobbed well.

"Now," she said, when it was over, "I feel better. The hateful had to come out, or I'd have had the small-pox. Popsydil, you and I will forswear company hereafter, and have a little comfort together."

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CHAPTER XVII.

JETTY IN NEED OF MEDICINE.

NOT many months after the occurrence of the last chapter, Ike left the farm-house. Great was June's dismay when first she heard of his purpose.

"Why, Ike, what will father do without you? I trust I have not caused this change," she added sorrowfully.

"No, Miss June. I have something to do in the world, and it is time I was about it."

He spoke strongly, certainly, as a man who has made his decisions, and does not fear his strength to follow them. June wondered, but it was not

the first time that she had cause to wonder at him lately, for he had changed strangely.

His love had metamorphosed him, hopeless as it seemed. He grew larger in every way. The divine passion had seized him, deigned to dwell in him. This was a marvel. That she had refused him was no marvel, however. He knew she would, quite counted on it; would have been disappointed in her if she had not, and considered her less than he had always esteemed her.

Of course she would refuse him, out of respect to her own great womanliness and wondrous refinement; but then, he wished to confess, just the same. He would be a man, like other men, and utter words of love as fearlessly, though knowing they must meet rejection. He knew they would not meet scorn; he had measured her soul with line and plumb, and was not mistaken. He could bear cheerfully, nay, triumphantly, his rebuff, since it proved his ability to judge such character. It was right she should say "No," but—

He never filled out that *but*. It was left a dim, misty, and therefore alluring rainbow, lifting him up to wondrous undertakings, developing, like magic, his many capabilities.

Ike was a winter apple at best, developing slowly. Perhaps, for that reason, he was better able to bear the disappointments and blights of time. He would never be very large, but old Granny Thorpe used to say, "Ike has mighty in'ards; his bow'ls of mercy never fail." This because of his wonderful and repeated kindnesses to doleful Jetty Blake, who always returned them with vituperation and abuse, but to find, in her next emergency, his aid as ready.

No, Ike was not large physically, neither very handsome. The deep-set blue eyes were dark and bright, but not large, his features by no means regular. Yet he could not be homely. Tupper is right:

"The mind fashioneth a tabernacle suitable for itself."

And the great thoughts and feelings which stirred the breast of Ike Hobson wrought themselves out

in tender smiles, cheery glances, and encouraging words, that wonderfully transformed his plainness. When Ike left Mr. Hargrave's he sought the room lately occupied by his grandmother, but on the way thither he dropped into Dr. Fosby's office.

This ruddy-faced youth, with plain but whole, well-fitting garments, and a modest, yet manly assurance of himself, but little resembled the small urchin to whom the doctor offered a situation years ago. They had met often since at Bryony's, and the good physician greeted him heartily.

"Well, young man, what do you want?" he said, smiling, as he seated himself.

"A situation," was the prompt reply. "I am ready to accept your long-ago offer now, Dr. Fosby."

"You are, hey? Then I am to suppose you have made your fortune, or, at least, secured a competence?" retorted the doctor, laughing.

"I have my hands and brains, and no person dependent on me for support," was the reply.

"And consider that good stock in trade? Well sir, I hope you have more sense and brains than some who have wished to fill this office, or you and I will both be soon sick of our bargain. When are you ready to begin?"

"To-day, if it suits you, sir."

The old gentleman laughed.

"Good!" he said. "Come, now," pointing to a row of books on a shelf before him, "hand me one of them, and let me see how much you know."

Ike obeyed instantly, his keen eyes taking in the titles of the several volumes, but Dr. Fosby had failed to trap him as he expected.

"Ah, sir, I see you've been at it already. I guess you'll do. Yes, I think you'll do—got it in you. But how are you going to keep yourself?"

"I'll manage, sir, if you'll only give me a chance to try."

The good gentleman rubbed his fat hands together, enthusiastically.



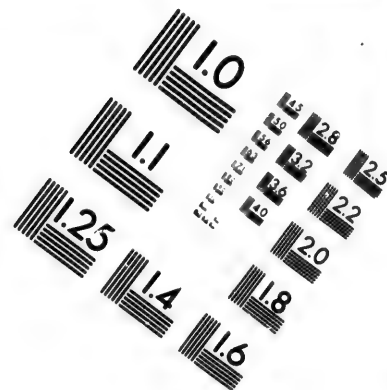
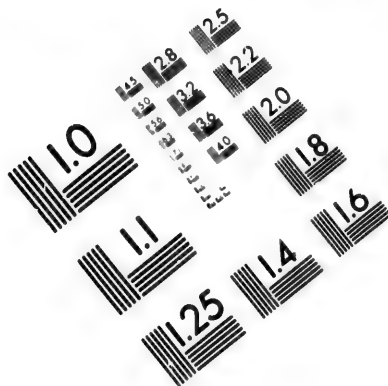
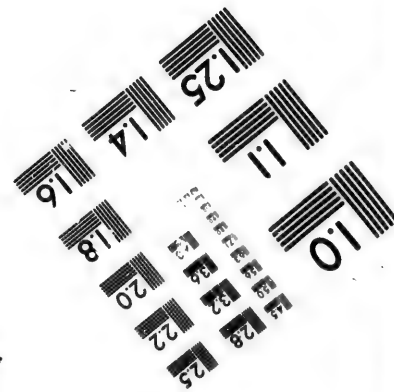
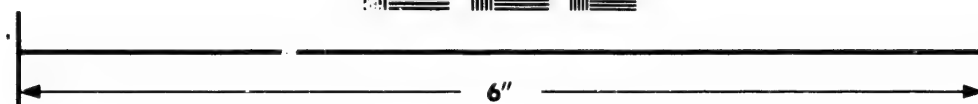
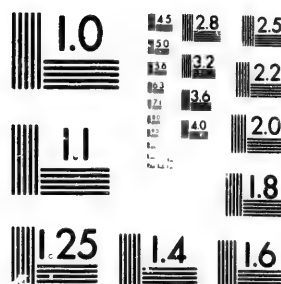


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"I'll be bound you will! Yes, you'll suit. Well, be off with you now, I'm too busy to begin to-day. Drop around to-morrow, and I'll set you at work."

That night, in his humble quarters, Ike was disturbed over his book by a rap at his door. In answer to his "come in" the door opened, and Jetty Blake presented herself. Hearing of Ike's coming home from a friend whom she was visiting, she had called to see him, and now stood, half blushing, before him.

She had grown as tall as Ike himself. The years had improved her appearance, and with her becoming attire, and half timid air, she looked very pretty. She had been told this dozens of times by scores of frivolous young men, and it always pleased her vanity, but not half as much as Ike's hearty "Why, Jetty, how nice you look," as he rose to greet her.

He had not seen her in a long time, but they had always been very free with each other. It seemed nothing very strange to him that she

should come to the old room, and he asked her to sit down. She did not comply with his request, however, but stood looking at him still through her fringing lashes.

"Up to the same old business, Ike. How is it you love books so?"

"I don't know how it is," he answered, smiling, "but I am glad it is. I was looking over a few old studies, as I expect to enter Dr. Fosby's office to-morrow."

"Old studies?" Jetty approached the table, and glanced over his page. "That isn't one of the old books we studied together. Do you know, Ike, I'd a'most be willing to study 'em over again—much as I hate 'em—to have the old days back, when we were so much together."

"We ought to progress. It wouldn't be pleasant for either of us to be just there again," he said, musingly. "But I would like dear old grandmother's face to smile on me," glancing about the room. "Perhaps you forget, Jetty, that those days were sometimes hungry and cold, and that you didn't wear such nice clothes."

"Nice clothes! What are they?" she cried, indignantly. "I'd give 'em up willing for rags to hear you call me Jetty, as you used to, and talk so good like. I was awful actin' in them days, Ike, but I allers thought lots of you, and now you're goin' to be a doctor, I s'pose, and git 'way off from me. O, Ike, if you only would take me, I'd try hard to learn somethin', and not disgrace you. They all tell me I'm handsome, Ike, but I know you don't see like other folks. I have tried hard to dress nice and neat, as you'd like. I'd be willin' to do 'most anythin' to please you, and I know I'd make you happy."

This was a trying situation for our Ike. The girl was looking at him beseechingly out of her shining black eyes, her hands playing nervously with the fringes of her shawl. Ike had never seen her look so well, never so subdued and quiet, yet the thrill in her voice betrayed her earnestness, and it pained him to refuse her. But there was nothing else to do.

"Jetty, you make a mistake," he said, gently.

"You unduly exalt old memories and forget yourself. You know we never agreed for more than ten minutes at a time, and I fear we have not grown more together since our lives parted."

"But I can grow like you and I will," she said, vehemently. "Don't send me away."

She approached him, and laid one hand on his arm. He removed it kindly but firmly:

"No, Jetty, you must not be deceived. We can never be other than friends. I respect you too much to accept your offer. I could not give you love enough to satisfy your heart."

"Yes, you could," she interrupted eagerly. "I don't ask anything but the right to be with you. O, Ike"—reading his determination in his eye—"don't send me away!"

"I must—and now," he answered, gravely. "I do not love you—never could. You cannot be my wife. I am sorry for all this, but do not fear. My lips shall never repeat even a part of this night's history. Let us forget it has been. I pray you may some day find you were mistaken in yourself."

He walked to the door as he spoke, determined to leave the house until she should depart; but she sprang between him and the door.

"You don't think I'm good enough for you!" she cried, angrily. "No one but that little red-haired miss will suit a gentleman like you! O, I know your secret, don't I, though! You think she'll have you if you make a doctor of yourself, but she doesn't love like I do. She wouldn't wait for you all these years."

Ike's face was pale to sternness, yet his voice retained its tender pity.

"Jetty, will it make you happier to know she doesn't love me, that I do not expect her to wait for me? I cannot throw away my life, knowing this, however. I am accountable, for my talents and actions, to a higher than human power. It is useless to talk longer. God help you, Jetty. He is able. God help you to live a noble life, the better because of this disappointment. In Christ Jesus pain is gain," and he gently put her aside, and, opening the door, passed out and down to the street.

The girl threw herself across the bed and groaned. She sat up and pressed her hands to her face. Presently she arose, and went slowly down over the stairs, and out into the cool night air. She felt dazed and faint, and she felt needy, too. She yearned for sympathy and knew not where to find it.

"Mother wouldn't care. I can't tell her and have her laugh at me," she said, as she stood upon the sidewalk and looked bitterly about her. "What's the odds? what need I care what becomes of me!"

O, how fraught with danger was that hour! The light from Bryony's window fell across the road invitingly. "Go over there!" whispered her good angel.

"I'm a-mind to. I would if I was sure Dick wasn't in. What if he is in? I can face it out, but—but I feel so, and she was allers so different from most."

A minute after a face peeped into Bryony's room.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, Jetty; come in."

The girl went in and sat down by the stove. She did not look at Bry, she did not speak; but there was something unusual on her downcast face.

Bry regarded her a few minutes silently, then, as if wishing for something to say, she remarked on the girl's new dress.

"It is very pretty. Did Ellice make it?"

"Yes; and it's becoming, they says, but what do I care? O, Bryony, I'm about ready to give up. I wish I was dead, I do! it's no sorter use to live!" and she threw her hands up over her head.

Bry begged her to come and sit beside her, and soon had coaxed out the whole story. She tried to comfort the stricken girl, but Jetty refused to be comforted.

"You don't know anything about it!" she said.

"No. But I know some one who does."

"Who?"

"Jesus."

The girl's black eyes flashed up in great astonishment.

"He never loved anyone that didn't love him?" she said, questioningly.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not," quoted Bry, simply.

"O!" with prolonged, intense, sympathetic surprise. "Did he take it hard?"

"It killed him."

"O, Bryony Perkins! I'm afeered that's a whopper! He died on the cross!"

"Yes, I know," said Bry, with assurance. "He died on the cross, but not *by* the cross. It didn't kill him. He was dying when they hung him there, and he'd 'a' died just the same if they hadn't. Don't you know he died sooner than the two thieves, and sooner than anybody else ever died on the cross, because he had a broken heart? Mr. Gardenell said so."

Jetty listened with great, distended eyes,

and faith unquestioning. "I'm sorry for him," she said.

"And he's sorry for you. I wish you'd let him help you. He could do it better than anyone else, and he wants to."

"I don't know," said the girl disconsolately. "I'm afeared he'd soon tire of me. Then I don't see how he could help me. I'm not speritual, like mother. I can't communicate with sperits."

"But Jesus isn't a spirit," said the child, warmly. "He's just *Jesus*. *Our Jesus!* who made folks happy and well when he was here, and can do it now if we'll let him. And O, Jetty, you're one of 'his own,' and if you don't let him help you he'll feel as bad as ever!"

The girl lifted her head at this, and shook it mournfully.

"I wouldn't like to make him feel worse, or anything," she said, "but I don't know how to take him. 'I allers was stupid at learnin', and I'm afeared I'm old to begin this. Howsumever, I don't want to hurt, but I don't know how to tell him."

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"I'll tell him," cried Bry, joyfully, "and you listen and you'll learn how. It's easy, and so nice; and he'll always hear you, and he'll be a husband to you, Jetty"—lowering her voice—"I read it in my med'cine. A husband! just think! and he's better than anyone else! Now kneel just here, close to my chair, where I can touch you, and I will pray."

Jetty got on her knees obediently, and laid her head in the little lap. Two tiny hands were clasped on it, and such a simple prayer went up! Jetty understood every word, and now and then groaned an assent.

"That's amen, sure," she said when it was done. "O Bryony, I wish I was good! I wish I was like you, I do. I'd rather just die now while I'm here, where he seems to hear me, than git up and go out and fight it, for it'll all come back, I know it will!"

"Yes, but he'll be everywhere to help you fight it, Jetty, and by and by it'll bring some good, you see if it don't. He wanted you to get something better than Ike."

Jetty Blake walked away very slowly from that house a little after.

"'Came unto his own, and his own received him not!'" she repeated. "That's just what I did! He was allers mine, was Ike, allers mine in my heart, but he didn't receive me. O, if I was only sure the other would—he as was not received—it 'ud be a comfort, sure!"

And Bry said to herself:

"How many people there are who need medicine. I wonder he didn't make 'em so as they wouldn't have to take it!"

She opened her Bible. Her eyes met a familiar verse, one she could read glibly now, from oft studying:

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

She read it now with peculiar emphasis:

"'All things,' med'cine and all. I s'pose we wouldn't enjoy that world so much if we hadn't bad things in this; and p'raps we would not love him so well if we didn't need him to

do things for us; and p'raps he loves us better 'cause there are some things he has to do for us all the time. I love everybody better after I've had to doctor 'em. Jetty's lots more comfortable than she ever was 'fore in her life!"

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CHAPTER XVIII.

NEXT COMES.

WHEN Isaac Hobson presented himself at Dr. Fosby's office on the day appointed, it was with a troubled, yet decided face.

"Just in time! That's right; a physician should be prompt. Well, I think I am ready for your company," was his greeting.

Hobson did not take the chair whirled towards him, or lay down his hat, as the doctor's hand indicated. He did say, in a disturbed way, however:

"Dr. Fosby, I have changed my mind."

The good doctor looked more than surprised. "Come, come," he said, jocosely. "You have

picked up another old grandmother to support, have you? That's like a clap of thunder—not expected such a cool, clear day. You don't mean it, Hobson? I gave you credit for more grit. You're not frightened out of your purpose, at the very beginning, surely?"

"No, sir. Not out of my ultimate purpose of becoming a physician. But"—he hesitated painfully—"thanking you kindly sir, for your interest in me, I believe it's my duty to leave this city."

"Do you realize how difficult it will be for you to acquire the knowledge you desire in a strange community, without friends, position or wealth?"

"Yes, sir."

"You still feel you must go?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, this is strange. - You had no such conviction when here yesterday?"

"No, sir. Circumstances have arisen since which lead to my decision."

The gentleman looked troubled; more, annoyed.

"I cannot understand this," he said. "'Circumstances have arisen'—nonsense! I think, young man, you owe me an explanation."

"Yes, sir, I do." Ike spoke quickly. "I only hesitated because such an explanation involved the feelings of another. I—I have discovered that a young lady of my acquaintance has an uncommon regard for me—" again the youth stammered and stopped short.

The doctor laughed.

"Don't blush so, Hobson. I had such a misfortune happen to myself, once, and, like yourself, no doubt, rather exulted in the discovery. Well, I suppose you consider it too hard times to support a wife and learn a profession, too, and think you can dispense with the latter rather than the former, hey?"

"O, no, sir, you have mistaken entirely. I do not love the young lady—never can."

"Then where is the objection to your remaining here? You are not supposed to know of the young lady's sentiment."

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"But—but, sir, she acknowledged it to me."

"Why!" The doctor's whistle was surprised, prolonged. "What a fix! Offered herself! If ever a poor fellow was to be pitied! What did you do? Put off an answer, hoping to rid yourself of the lady and the city at the same time?"

"No, sir. I refused to marry her." Ike's face was crimson to the roots of his brown hair. "There was nothing else to do, you know, sir. I could not deceive her. I think, if I go away, she will forget. She is young, sir."

Ike's tender, pitiful heart and manly courage were both voiced in that one sentence. Dr. Fosby recognized and respected them. He contracted his brows and mused awhile.

"Merciless hoyden!" he said at last, irritably. "Why should you exile yourself, peril all your interests, and when I begin to want you! It's a shame! Come! here's an idea. Why can't we transport her to some other part of the globe? I'd willingly pay her fare to California or the

Fiji Islands, to relieve your conscience. No doubt she would go almost anywhere about this time."

"Yes, sir, but it's best that she should stay here, where she's close to Bryony. Little Bry can help her more than anyone else. If you please, Dr. Fosby, I feel certain I am the one to go!"

The doctor did not answer at once. He did beckon the boy to a seat.

"I am thoroughly vexed!" he said, presently. "All my plans dashed in a moment. Here I was indulging hopes of a son and successor. Well, well! this is a world of disappointments, surely. I see I am doomed to loneliness in my old age!"

Then, as the doctor's eyes met Ike's sad face, he suddenly realized that the heaviest blow had not been aimed at himself.

"I'm a selfish old jackass!" he said. "I can get along as I have, no doubt, but what about you? I can't let you go off hap-hazard, and never

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know what becomes of you. Let me see; why, of course! the very thing! why didn't I think of it before? and Howard understands his business, if ever a physician did. Come, cheer up, Hobson. I believe this thing will turn right side up for you yet. Did you ever hear of Dr. David Howard? No! well, you're not as old as I am, yet, or so well acquainted with the medical fraternity. He's no quack, let me inform you, no twaddle. A king among men, master of his craft. Few fools who wouldn't like to change my hands for his. He owes me a debt, too, he imagines, and one not easily discharged, which oppresses his conscience. That will secure you a welcome. How is it? Will you go? Germany's not the worst place to study physic, but it takes money to get there. Can you manage it, think you?"

"Yes, sir. I can get there somehow. I can work my passage, and if it's best for me to go there'll be an opening."

"Well! that's Bryony, all over. Now how

long before you could get ready to make a start?"

"A half hour's notice will be enough any time. My trunk is packed, and there's only a good-by to my sisters and Bry."

The doctor laughed.

"You're a brick. You'll suit Howard through and through. Then he's an old bach — a woman-hater. He'll like you the better because you've run from one. I don't know now but he'll consider I'm putting him under fresh obligations, instead of helping him to liquidate the old debt; and I am! I feel a personal loss, certainly."

In less than two weeks Ike's good-bys were said, and he was on his way to Germany. Not working his way, however. Dr. Fosby had presented him with a through ticket, a pocket-book not quite empty, and a suit of broadcloth.

"There! don't go to thanking me, like a little sissy!" he said, characteristically, as Ike stammered and choked over his gifts. "I'll have to

take away all the credit for grit that I gave you if you cave in this way. It isn't any obligation at all. It rather makes me feel 'comfortable,' as Bry would say, to imagine I am fitting off a grown son for his travels. Do well by yourself. Make a thorough physician, and come back and fill my old shoes. That's all the reward I want. There! God bless you!"

Dr. Fosby's eyes looked very suspicious as he hurried up the wharf.

"I really liked the little chap. Like as not it's a good thing he's gone, or I'd have been as soft as a woman over him in another fortnight. Perhaps it's lucky Lizzie didn't leave me any children, I'm such an old fool. I suppose little Bry is crying *her* eyes red over his loss. Well, well, he's a good boy, and Howard's not a bit too good a teacher for him, if he is a prince among us."

.

One, two, three, the years went by, four, five, six. Dick and Ellice have long since been married, and Bry is aunt to several bright-eyed

babes. Hephzibah has married, too, and removed to a distant State with her husband. The occasional notes from Ike cease with her going, and only a word or two, through Beulah, tells Bry of his welfare.

Few changes have come to Widow Grafham's home. Her little grandchildren still grow up about her, Kiddy still finds delight in serving her. But on Our Street many changes are visible. Old Nurse Adams is dead, and many of the shopkeepers are changed, though Hudworth still is there.

Wonderful things these years have brought Bryony. Besides many visits from Rose Hargreave and her little brother, have been occasional ones from June, still much away at school, and — can you believe it? — she herself has visited Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell.

It seemed too good to be true, the letter that came directed to herself, begging her to accompany them and their children on a visit to Mrs. Gardenell's childhood's home. But it was true,

and a check covering the expenses accompanied the letter. So Ellice kindly escorted her to the place where Eddie Campbell was waiting to go with her farther.

Such a summer! A summer at Valley Farm, in the old red farm-house, surrounded by green fields, and tree-clad hill-tops, and murmuring streams, and, greatest joy, with her dear Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell.

Then there were the children, happy and merry, and old Aunt Sarah Walton, so kind and gentle as to be almost unrecognizable as the "Aunt Sally" of former years. Beside these was Aunt Mildred, handsome and cheery, Uncle Fred — Bry picked up and used these titles as did the other children — as merry and boyish as if life had not touched his heart, or accident crippled his manly form.

Pleasant were the mornings in Uncle Fred's studio, among his pictures. Bry never tired of this spot. Delightful were the long afternoon rides; and the evening readings and talks were

never afterwards forgotten by our little friend. Yet perhaps, above every other hour of her stay, she cherished most the remembrance of the time spent at little Violet's grave with Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell beside her, when she heard the story of that sweet life and glorious death.

It ended, after awhile, that happy visit; and then her friends made her what forever after seemed to her a marvellous offer, that she should come to their home and hearts as one of their own.

"Such comfortable things so near me!" she said, and yet she decided to go back. "Mother left Dick with me, please, sir, and — and — *she* 'spects me, and *God* 'spects me to take care of him. When *he* don't need me, mother said God would send for me, and I'd like to be in the right place when they come."

It was well Bryony had so decided. Jetty Blake would have sadly missed her in her gropings after a better life. It had been a hard struggle for Jetty at first. Oft-repeated and

patient were Bryony's teachings, but by-and-by the carefully, tearfully, prayerfully sown word began to germinate; another power, unknown before, began to actuate Jetty's life. Then how helpful she suddenly became to those about her, especially to Dick Perkins' growing family.

It was while she was there one time, out of work, that Ross came in trouble to Bry for advice. Betty, the maid, had left them, and Aunt Myra was away, and where could she find a girl? Bry recommended Jetty; and Jetty, who was very reluctant to go there to work, finally consented, "just till they find some one else." But she was so helpful, trusty, cheerful, that no further search was made, and, almost unconsciously, she became a fixture.

But she dreaded June's coming home. She could not forget Ike had preferred June, she did not wish to forget that June had refused Ike. But who ever withstood Miss Juniper Hargreave's fascination? She had not been home a week before Jetty quoted her as authority, and went to

her for advice. Indeed, it was June's advice that at last settled the most important event of Jetty's life, her marriage with Tom Waters, Mr. Hargreave's man-of-all-work.

"Do you love him?" June asked, gravely.

"Well, yes, mostly. Better'n anyone else that loves me."

This was rather a peculiar answer, but June took it for an affirmative.

"You must remember he is not a Christian," continued June.

"Yes, miss, but he's stedd' and thinkin' on it. I'm sure I could help him, miss."

"You don't feel above him, Jetty? I don't think it is ever safe to marry with such a feeling!"

"To be sure not, miss. He's as well as meself, and has as much learnin'; an' I never thought as much of that as I should."

"You feel sure he'll be satisfied with you?"

"Yes, miss, proud of me, too. Why, he's foolish enough to think that I am beyond yourself!"

June laughed.

"Then I see no reason why I should not order your wedding dress," she said, gayly, and it was settled.

Beulah had married and left the city by this time, so no word had been heard for some time from Ike.

Dick was doing well, and had begun to work for himself. One dull spell Dr. Fosby brought him the plans of a cottage to be built on Our Street, near the Oaks, where a number of pretty houses were rising rapidly.

"Figure so as to give yourself a good living, Perkins. I shall not let it to anyone else," said the doctor.

It proved to be a pretty house, beautifully modelled, with a south bay window. When it was finished Dick took his wife and sister to see it, with pardonable pride.

"I never put a job out of my hands with which I was better pleased," he said. "I wonder who's to own it? It would just suit us. Here's Bry's

bay-window, and a good flower-plot in front, and such a nice vegetable garden behind. I couldn't have laid it out more convenient for myself."

Later in the day Dr. Fosby visited it, and when Dick called at his office in the evening he found him well pleased. He paid him cheerfully, and asked him to be kind enough to carry the deeds to the owner.

"It is on your way home," he said. "The giver of the deed does not wish to be known, and I should like to avoid being questioned."

So Dick took the paper, in his eagerness to get home with his spoils, without a question as to whom it was to be given. In his own little parlor, remembering, he drew out the paper and examined it. To his surprise he found it directed to his sister. Yes, rub his eyes as he might, it still read, "Miss Bryony Perkins," and he called to her gleefully.

"It seems too good to be true," he said, "but true it is!" and it was. So Bry had her bay-window.

"I wonder who the giver can be?" said Miss June, as, on returning from a survey of the premises, she seated herself in Bry's room, the bay-window of which was rich with fragrance and bloom.

"Why! don't you know? can't you guess?" asked Bry, breathlessly.

"No. I didn't know you had a suspicion!"

"I haven't a suspicion, I have an assurance. It can't be anyone else but my Ikey boy. Only you and he and I knew it was coming. So God let him send it. He'll be here next himself, see if he isn't. O, there never was so comfortable a boy in all the world as Ike! He's like the one he loves best—Jesus."

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER SCRAPS.

ONE scrap is, she got sick. Juniper, I mean, of course, and sick of everything.

It was a silly, tiresome world, ridiculous, foolish people in it. All the men were crazy, addle-brained, but Popsydil, and she wished she might be spared the sight of another masculine. There was no such thing as a woman's taking any comfort. There was nothing else for her to do in the world but to take care of somebody's house that she didn't want to take care of, or administer pills and nostrums for some other silly somebody's patients, who would be better off without them.

Which harangue means just this. Harold

Hargreave had proposed to her and gone away rejected, leaving her as miserable as himself.

She grew unusually irritable, persistently moody, and at last declared she should die if she did not get away from every familiar sight and sound; and if Popsydil cared the twentieth part of a dime for her, he had better take her across the ocean.

Popsydil did care the twentieth part of a dime for her, and so did Mrs. Maria. This little woman pleaded for her step-daughter, declaring she had earned a real vacation by her former years of hard work and constant study. They could get along nicely at the farm-house without either of them, if they only knew June was recruiting; and it was finally decided that father and daughter should visit Europe.

Rose thought she ought to go. June had everything. She even cried a little, a proper young lady like her; but her father's heart was not easily moved, and she was obliged to be content with June's promise that she would obtain her the same privilege some day.

June brightened up wonderfully when the journey was really settled upon. Ordered garments, wrote letters, visited friends, with what seemed a determination to turn the small world in which she moved upside down before her departure. Then, suddenly vanishing, left the farm-house doubly lonely.

They travelled almost incessantly, one way or another, with pleasure unceasing, Juniper's zeal never flagging, her pleasure never abating, until at last the nerves, strained before her departure, now worked unmercifully, suddenly gave way, and she was really ill.

Then the polite German became insufferable, the delightful Italian detestable, the Frenchman obsequious and palling. Juniper sighed for the sight of an American face.

"Such a miserable jargon of a language!" she groaned. "Not a bit like the delightful French I studied at Madame S—'s seminary! Why, I should really starve, Popsydil, if you were not with me, and, dear me, I believe I should be will-

ing to if I did not hope soon to hear again an English voice. Please don't let me be sick here!"

"Here" was a very pretty French town, and June was already sick. So, though her father was wont to indulge her, he refused to go farther, really alarmed that his favorite child, usually so well, should show signs of such lassitude and uneasiness. So, in spite of Miss June's protestations, he started one morning for a physician.

Then the willful girl arose, and persuaded her maid to dress her, only to find herself afterwards too ill to hold up her head. She was thankful to throw herself on the bed, and gaze lazily through the lace curtains at the changeful sky.

"O, for a glimpse of the farm-house!" June was really homesick. Her father tip-toed into the room, thinking she slept; but no! she turned with open eyes to greet him.

"Alone? You dear fellow! I'm so glad you didn't bring a doctor. The sound of a French tongue, just now, would distract me. I am afraid

I should turn him out of the room, or do something desperate. Isn't that a knock, Popsydil?"

Yes, it was a knock. Mr. Hargreave addressed the gentleman he admitted as Dr. Paul, and introduced him to his daughter.

The new-comer was not a large man, yet he did not impress you as very small. There was a manly decision, a native dignity about him that was marked, that induced Miss June with a little wholesome awe at the very beginning.

He advanced into the room, hat in hand, a gentleman, every inch, in appearance and dress. June noticed that he was young, that his spotless linen was very becoming. Then, with a rare, bright smile, and in the sweetest French, the doctor said:

"I am sorry to see you so ill, mademoiselle."

June was at least twenty-three now, and might reasonably be supposed to possess a little dignity; but she did burst forth in a strange fashion.

"For pity's sake, doctor, speak English if you can! I am not a mademoiselle! I do not

want to be a mademoiselle! I am a plain Yankee miss, and am so sick of French!"

A grave smile flitted over the doctor's face, but his next words were English, pure, sweet English, without the taint of foreign accent.

He asked a few questions concerning her health, very few, however; the new doctor seemed to understand his patient's mood instinctively. He talked a little upon other topics, keeping her mind from the prominent thought these weeks — herself. On leaving he said:

"I think I shall have to prescribe a little" — he smiled again, at the slight frown June could not altogether conceal at that hated word "prescribe" — "a little quiet. Don't eat, don't think, don't talk much. I think that is all to-day."

"Why! what a delightful doctor you are!" cried June, impulsively. "Such a bunch of charming negatives, and not a grain of medicine! Dr. Paul, I owe you everlasting thanks, and will recover immediately if possible."

Then, as the gentleman disappeared she said: "Now I suppose that grave gentleman is thinking what a silly thing I am. Isn't he nice, Popsydil? Only, I am really afraid of him. Did you notice his eyes? They pierce right through to the very seat of disease. I was so thankful, while he was here, to remember I was a good girl. Those eyes must be such a terror to evil-doers."

"I fear, then, they'll be a terror to you when he comes again. Don't forget that prescription against talking. The doctor would be very sorry to be the cause of his orders being disobeyed."

"Yes; but, Popsydil, dear, his English was so sweet, like the breath of English violets. He's nice, like you."

"Six feet and all," laughed Mr. Hargreave.

"Popsydil, honest truly, between you and I, I hate big men."

"Ah! that ought to be pleasant information," said the gentleman, dubiously.

"Now you know I don't mean you, but — well, it seemed good! Such white teeth and clear skin

and blue eyes, after so many swathy complexions and black shiners was really — ”

Mr. Hargreave stopped her mouth with his hand.

“Insulting child! You shall surely make no more comments on your father.”

She pulled the hand away, and kissed him, saying tenderly:

“This is the way to stop me, always.”

When the doctor called the next day, he held a bouquet of English violet and a sprig of heliotrope in his hand. He did not say he brought them for his patient, he did not seem to hear her little stifled exclamation of delight at sight of them, but he kindly forgot them when going; left them, indeed, where he placed them while he felt her pulse, beside her pillow, where their fragrance filled her nostrils.

The doctor's visits began to be looked forward to, were always talked over with her father afterwards. They continued steadily even after the patient began to convalesce. The doctor lodged

at the same hotel with his patient, and considered it a pleasure to drop in occasionally.

As our friend grew stronger she took pleasure, in a quiet sort of way, in things about her. Her special delight grew to be the music in the parlors below, and, stretched wearily on her couch, she listened to the voices which night after night ascended to her ears in magic song. Occasionally a sweet tenor voice joined the singers, and June learned to listen eagerly for that, to be disappointed when it was not heard. One day she heard the same voice in an adjoining apartment, singing a familiar English hymn, and that night she questioned her father:

"Who is it sings that delicious tenor, Popsy-dil?"

"Why! don't you know? Your little doctor, June, to be sure."

As the days went by, Dr. Paul passed an occasional evening with Mr. Hargreave and his daughter. There was an ease in the young doctor's manners very fascinating to June, a little quiet

authority, when acting professionally, quite as charming. But she had never seen his real self until he made these calls. Social, brilliant, self-possessed, gentlemanly, and exceedingly sensitive to thought and feeling.

Miss Hargreave grew better rapidly, but the doctor commanded quiet long after she felt well enough to go out again.

"Not this week, Miss Hargreave. Next week you may go a little. If Monday is a pleasant day, I will take you to see a little friend of mine, if you are willing."

She was willing. Monday was a delicious day, and June felt like a bird escaped from bondage. The fresh blood was bounding through her veins again, her cheeks were blooming.

"I have a few professional calls to make, Miss Hargreave. You will not mind them? My little friend is crippled and poor, so"—touching significantly a large bouquet beside him—"we make life bloom for her when we can."

It was a mean old house before which the doc-

tor drew up. Short as the good man was, he had to stoop to pass the door-way. It was a long, dingy apartment into which he conducted Juniper.

Directly in front of the door, where the visitor's eyes first rested, sat a child on a high stool, or chair, rather, for it had a back, behind a counter, or work-bench, on which were various toys with which she was busy.

The child was deformed, her head being drawn somewhat to one side, her back disfigured by a hump. But her face was very striking, pure and spiritual, with large, dreamy blue eyes, and the noble head was covered with a profusion of pale gold hair.

In the same room, near the child, a dark-eyed boy of fourteen or fifteen summers worked, evidently the son of a black-haired woman who was making toys in the farther end of the apartment.

The little cripple's face lighted wonderfully at sight of Dr. Paul, and she uttered two or three exclamations of delight, and stretched out her

hands eagerly as she saw the flowers. At sight of the lady with him the rich blood mantled her brow, and a pretty, beseeching look came into her eyes, but the doctor's voice seemed to reassure her. His words June could not understand; they were German; but he ended them by pronouncing her name very distinctly, "Miss June Hargreave."

"Pardon me," he said to the young lady. "I thought Christy might remember the first half best."

Christy smiled at the lady, and June watched the deft, thin-veined fingers as they separated the beautiful flowers into a dozen little clusters, each cluster a gem of beauty, then smoothed them again into one whole. She kissed them then, and smiled towards Dr. Paul, who was addressing the woman.

The child wished to please her guest. She tried to converse with her, holding up the flowers, turning her eyes to the sky, and at last saying, very distinctly, "America."

The young man noticed June's troubled face and came to the rescue.

"Christy wishes to know if God sends you such lovely flowers in America," he said. Then he interpreted June's words for Christy, telling her about American flowers.

Then, while June selected some toys for her little brother, he turned again to the woman. June smiled over her task. First French to Lisette, then German to Christy, then English to herself, and each apparently perfect in itself.

"'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength.' That child's simple trust in God rebukes me always," said the doctor as they rode away. "She called those flowers 'the gift of God,' and thanked him on receiving them. I am very much interested in her, Miss Hargreave. She reminds me of a little friend of my boyhood. I found her in the hospital, laid very low with a malignant fever, which had already deprived her of both parents. After she grew better I found her this home, and she is so grateful, so cheerful and happy!"

June looked up to him through beaming eyes. She did not guess then what she afterwards learned was true, that he had taught the child all she knew of religion; but she said, enthusiastically:

"You are a real physician, doctor. It helps me just to know you. I wish I had more of Christy's simple trust and your strength."

That evening, sitting alone with her father, she asked, suddenly:

"What is he, father?"

"Who?"

"My little doctor."

"A Christian gentleman, June, if I am a judge."

"So he is, Popsydil, and he makes Christianity look very inviting, does he not? and without saying much, either. One is constantly puzzled which to admire most; his gentlemanly bearing, fine intellect, or Christian heart. Am I not right?"

"Undoubtedly, June."

"But I was thinking of something else when I asked my question. He is a triangle in more senses than one. This morning, for instance. One moment he spoke French to Madame Lisette, the next German to little Christy, and then English to me; and I'm sure he spoke each as if it was his native tongue. What is he, papa?"

"Why don't you ask him, June?" and Mr. Hargreave smiled curiously.

"Me! Why, Popsydil, I wouldn't dare to, quite. He's real good and kind, but—I am just a little bit afraid of him. He might think it unwarrantable curiosity."

"Then I fear you must go unsatisfied," was all her father's reply.

After that June became much interested in the crippled toy-maker, and visited her often. Sometimes with Dr. Paul, sometimes alone, and once she persuaded her father to accompany her. By means of signs, the little French Christy possessed, and a few fragments of broken English, they managed to communicate with each other;

and June seldom went without some slight gift, never came away without having received benefit.

Numerous and various were June's little offerings. Fruits, flowers, and occasionally books were pressed into service, and one day, to Dr. Paul's surprise, a huge cage, with a gay-colored parrot, was hoisted into the carriage.

A smile flitted across his face which did not escape June's quick eyes, slight as it was, and soon repressed.

"You must not laugh, doctor," she said. "The parrot was brought up by a German woman, and speaks that language. I thought it would be a comfort to Christy when she was lonely, and no one by who could speak to her."

"You are quite right and very thoughtful," replied the young man, gently. "No other gift could please her as well."

The days now passed fleet-footed to June. Her father had heard no more of home, though it was two months since she declared herself dying for a

sight of American soil. He dared suggest this to her in a teasing way, one night, inquiring if she was not now quite willing to depart.

"What! and leave my little doctor?" she cried, lugubriously. Nevertheless, after that they quite talked of going.

A few days after this the doctor invited June to accompany him on a ride into the country. "I have a few hours to spare. Your society will add much to their pleasure," he said. So she went.

It was a delightful spot where they halted. Leaving the carriage they strolled off after flowers. Long after the doctor had wearied of this sport and returned to the horse, June still flitted about, adding to her store.

"See! they are for Christy. Are they not beautiful?" she cried, holding them up for his inspection. Then she stopped, partly because of a certain something in his earnest glance.

"Juniper," he said, extending his hand to her, and she started. Surely, she had not heard that name before since leaving home. "Juniper, your

father talks of departure. You are very dear to me, very necessary. Will you — dare you promise to be my wife?"

It was very sudden, startling. June did not touch the extended hand, and avoided the asking eyes.

"O, Dr. Paul, you don't mean it, surely!" she said, piteously.

"I fear I do," he said, smiling.

"O dear! what shall I do? I thought *you* were different from other men. Why! I ran away from America to get rid of Cousin Harold, and now — But there! Harold has nearly forgotten. Men don't feel *very* deeply—you will —"

She raised her eyes, intending to add "forget this soon;" but that earnest, quiet glance, so different from any she had ever met before, rebuked her, and she said, instead, "You will please say you don't really mean it, doctor?"

The young man smiled again.

"I cannot say that, Juniper. I do mean it, most certainly. But do not distress yourself.

Speak the truth. I can bear it. Much as I love you, I would not care to wed you without your love."

"But—but— O dear! Why are men so anxious to get married?"

"I did not know that they were. I have not been particularly so myself," was the quiet reply. But unheeding it June went on ruefully:

"And I don't see how you can expect me to—to—Dr. Paul. Why! I'd as soon think of marrying my own father! There!"—as a comical look crossed his features—"not that you are so old, you know, because you are not, but—but—why, I'm almost afraid of you, you are so grave."

The mouth parted in a real smile now.

"I assure you that there is no need that you should be afraid of me, Juniper," he said.

"No, I know; but—but I can't help it all the same. I do so hate to make people miserable, and I suppose it'll be just like you to be miserable forever now."

"I shall not dare to promise you that!" he said. "I certainly shall not be if God will help me otherwise. My work lies still before me, the world needs me as much as it ever did. I did not intend that either your 'yea' or 'nay' should deter me from duty, Miss June. I shall live my life, by God's help, whatever he sends. I am not unused to disappointment. Shall we turn homeward now?"

Yes, June was very ready. Wished heartily she had not lingered, that they had gone home an hour ago, before this conversation commenced.

Perhaps he read her thought. He certainly did his best to divert her mind to other channels, appearing very like the Dr. Paul who had not spoken those burning words.

He succeeded very well, too. June almost forgot, for a while, until, on nearing the house, she encountered again those earnest eyes.

"You never forget, do you, doctor?" she asked, half timidly, as he assisted her from the carriage.

"Not often," he replied, simply. "Lie down and rest as soon as you remove your wraps. You will need it after this long ride. Good afternoon."

Just like him! Kind and thoughtful of her comfort continually, and just like him, too, to be so kind and gentle, as if his refusal had not been!

June disobeyed his directions by sitting right down in the first chair that came to hand, and having a good cry.

"Hateful old thing! Why did he ask me if he didn't want me? He's just like the rest of them, though I thought he wasn't. I suppose he thinks I am a silly little fool anyway, and is glad he escaped me in time. Well, I am a fool, everybody knows that, and — and of course I am not sorry. Who'd want a pair of eyes reading right through all their silliness all the time? O, dear! I wonder if he did see that — that I was afraid all the time that I did like him a wee bit better than anyone else? We'll see if

anyone shall walk straight into my heart, and do as they please, and never even say, 'With your leave, miss!' I'm not used to such lording!"

And Dr. Paul, riding along, smiled to himself as he said:

"My little June!"

CHAPTER XX.

ENDINGS.

OF course Miss June petitioned at once to return to America, and of course Mr. Hargreave opened his eyes and said demurely: "What! and leave your little doctor?" And then Miss June blazed out with:—she hoped she'd never see his face again! and worried incessantly for the next two days lest her wish should be gratified.

"A difficult case kept me away from home," he said on appearing, and was so like his olden self that Juniper was almost ready to believe that afternoon's scene the conjuring of her own brain. Their intercourse was by no means interrupted

or changed. Since he treated her just the same, she could see no reasons to refuse his kindly invitations here and there, and two weeks more passed, for Mr. Hargreave seemed in no hurry to depart.

But at last the day of departure was set, and Juniper shed a few tears in secret, without confessing the reason, even to herself; and gathered together an array of faded bouquets and other knick-knacks for preservation, with a very mournful countenance.

A few evenings before their intended departure, Dr. Paul dropped in upon the pair, welcome as usual.

A casual remark of Mr. Hargreave's in respect to their speedy departure, brought a shade to the young man's face which June's quick eyes discovered. A little after Mr. Hargreave was summoned to the parlor to see a visitor—a very unusual occurrence—and, excusing himself, left June and the doctor alone.

The young man arose and paced the room

back and forth several times. He did not look at June, but she felt very guilty, and when he stopped before her she was inwardly trembling.

"June," he said, "I put myself in your hands again."

"What a persistent man you are, Dr. Paul!"

"Am I? Well, persistency is a good thing in a good cause. Besides, I think you made a mistake when you refused me the other day, June."

"A mistake? Doctor, I am astonished!" Miss June was a wee bit indignant.

"Yes," quietly, gravely. "You spoke quickly, and without weighing the matter. Your answer was that of impulse. You had not studied your own heart. You have since—have you not? and I think I am not mistaken in saying you find I have a place there."

He spoke so quietly, yet so surely, as a man convinced of his ground, that June could not really be as provoked as she wished to be.

"Are you not taking too much for granted, doctor?" she began however, warmly.

"Not more than I wish you to grant," he answered quickly, smiling into her face. "June, be true to yourself—I would not have you otherwise—but be true to me also. Do not send me away for a whim. I offer you no half-heart, I assure you—I ask no half-heart in return; but I want an honest decision. I have a right to it. Think before you speak again."

When Dr. Paul spoke in this tone persons were wont to obey. June was no exception to this rule. She did not look up now or speak. She felt his keen eyes searching her face, and feared them. Her cheeks grew rosy beneath his glance, her lips trembled.

He turned away.

"I will not constrain you," he said. "I would not, for the world, draw you by any other than the cords of love."

He walked to a window and peered out into the darkness. After awhile he sought her side again.

"Well, June?" he whispered, questioningly.

"You are right," she said, with a half sob;

then, throwing her arms suddenly about his bowed neck, she cried, "Take every bit of me. I've belonged to you this month back."

It was rather a predicament for Mr. Hargreave to open the door upon this scene, but he did. The young man's face flushed a little, but he did not look otherwise disconcerted. He had no time for words. June stopped them by springing to her father's side and twining the arms so lately about the doctor's neck around his.

"Not a word, you precious old hateful Popsydil!" she said. "If you had not left the room it never would have happened! Anyway, there's no use in resisting fate, and he's a terribly persistent man. Then you know, if you must give me away, you'd rather give me to him than to any other man living!"

And Mr. Hargreave did not deny this.

"To think," said June to her father, hours after, "to think I'd be willing to become Mrs. Paul just for love! O, Popsydil, isn't it ridiculous?"

"What ridiculous? Mrs. Dr. Paul Howard? By no means. It is a good name and a very noted one. Surely"—answering the look of surprise on his daughter's face—"surely you knew he was the son of old Dr. David Howard, and was only called Dr. Paul to distinguish him from the elder? The old gentleman died a year since, but the people cling to the title."

"When did you learn all that, Popsydil?"

"O, a month or two ago, when I found my little girl was getting uncommonly interested in the medicine man. Hey! not blushing? It didn't take the most acute perception to discover that, Puss, but I'm more than satisfied with your choice."

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The journey to America was delayed one steamer. The doctor declared he had only been waiting a favorable opportunity to visit America, and it was decided unanimously that the wedding should take place at the farm-house.

June seemed very proud of her choice when he

really became such, and showed it in a variety of odd ways, very amusing to both gentlemen. She was very particular not to write a word home about her doctor, and charged her father to keep her secret when he wrote to his wife by the steamer which should have carried them. Yet, strange to say, the whole household were watching eagerly for their coming, and all expected the stranger.

Miss Rose herself had superintended the sweeping, airing and decorating of the spare chamber, had filled the vases with fresh roses, and waited at the gate, a tall, graceful girl, robed in white, with bright curls fastened away from her face, as the carriage drove up.

On the piazza Mrs. Hargreave and her boy, in holiday attire, and Aunt Myra, arrayed in stiff black silk, awaited company. Doctor sounded well to Aunt Myra. She had rolled it over her tongue a hundred times that day, always adding a wonder as to June's being so sensible. Yes, the whole household awaited the guest; even Tom

and Jetty watched for a glimpse of Miss June's beau.

Rose intended to be very proper indeed, and put out her hand in grand style; but the "little big doctor," as she dubbed him, upset all this by kissing her heartily, and saying, "Why! Primrose is quite a young lady."

The indignant miss flashed angry eyes at her sister, and whispered, at the first opportunity, "I'll pay you off for telling him I was called Primrose, when I haven't answered to the name those years!" And in spite of June's surprised "I never told him! He's the funniest man living! He just knows everything!" Rose was neither mollified or convinced.

Aunt Myra liked his looks. "Steddy and airnest, with somethin' to do in the world. It's jest surprisin' that that fly-away should git him!" was her comment that night to her brother. As to Mrs. Hargreave, her heart was won by that first tender greeting.

He kissed her cheek, and said "mother" in

such a tone that June, just behind, felt tears spring to her eyes; and he added, pathetically, "It is a blessed privilege, denied me many years, of calling any mortal by that sacred name. I trust I shall deserve this blessing!"

All had a greeting, even Jetty and Tom, whom Rose introduced to her brother to be. They liked his appearance, and the doctor was conscious all that day of Jetty's eyes fixed keenly on him, whenever she entered his presence.

He was surely soon at home. Before nightfall he had visited every portion of the farm, and become acquainted with every living creature. Or, as June said, "Renewed acquaintance; for I believe you have always known whatever I have. You act as if you had," she said, half-provoked, because he had called the cat, over which he stumbled, by her right name, "Aunt Martha;" a name, like her color and size, descended from her mother and grandmother.

"I am a lucky hit," he said, smiling. "And this is a real gypsy," patting the back of June's long-loved pony.

"There it is again! Too true to be all tuition," cried the girl laughing. "You shall not go near the city without me, or you will know all my friends before I introduce them."

About a week after their arrival June proposed a visit to Bryony. It was a lovely morning, and when June presented herself at the door the doctor stood waiting, a beautiful bouquet in his hand.

"Your little friend loves flowers," he said. "All children do, especially if invalid." And he handed her into the carriage as she exclaimed, "How thoughtful you are, Paul!"

Jetty, who had joined Tom, stood looking after the carriage.

"He's a gentleman, every inch," said Tom, thoughtfully, "yet as hearty and cheery as an old friend. He keeps making me think of somebody else."

"That's it!" returned his wife, quickly. "Just like an old friend, and yet so different."

Our little Bry! How natural still to call her

this! Yet she is no longer a child. Small she is — always will be; but by no means as small as in other days, neither is she quite so much of an invalid. She can move with less pain than formerly. The old sweet spirit, grown strong, is still about her, as she sits in the bay-window of her cottage, full of flowers, singing to herself, this morning.

"I wonder they don't come. I do want to see Miss June's doctor," she sighed. "But — but — I hope I'm not selfish — I *did* want Ikey boy to get her, seeing he loved her so well. Strange he never comes back or writes one word! Hark! There's the sound of carriage-wheels! the door-bell! I believe it is June and her—" and little Bry started to her feet, leaning on her crutches, with a sweet, flushed, expectant face.

Yes, it was June, bringing a whole summer full of robins and blossoms in her breezy step and cooing voice. Bry clung to her neck, actually shedding tears, afraid to look up at the stranger, so soon to take her friend away again.

"Why, little Bry! You naughty girl! Crying, when I want you to be your brightest, most comfortable, to welcome my nice doctor. Come here, Dr. Paul, and tell this little girl how glad you are to see her. You must make a good impression, for her opinion goes very far with me."

There was small need to call the doctor. He had sprung eagerly towards the child, and only waited her lifted face. Now he took both her hands in his with an earnest, tender glance. She was devouring him with her eyes, a flush of eager excitement covering her pale cheeks.

"Bryony, little Bry, this is too much for you!" he said tenderly, placing her gently in her chair, and kissing her brow and lips; but she clung to him convulsively, and sobbed hysterically. June stood speechless and astonished, while his soothing hand smoothed the head bowed on his bosom.

"It's not 'cause I'm sorry, but — so — so comfortable!" Bry said at length, lifting her head. "And I'm ashamed that I didn't trust Him altogether when he says: *All things whatsoever ye*

sak.' I've asked every day since you went, that you should come back, and Miss June should love you; and yet, when they said 'twas Dr. Howard I *did* doubt. It was the strange name, you see; but—but you are my own Ikey boy, and I'm so—so thankful!" and Bry's full heart trembled to tears again.

June was sorely puzzled. "Come back! strange name! Ikey boy!" She did not understand this talk, neither the radiant face of the man she loved. He drew her gently towards him, reading her bewilderment.

"Dr. Paul Howard was only Dr. David Howard's adopted son. I shall not be less dear as Isaac Paul Hobson, shall I, June?" he asked, tenderly.

She struggled in his embrace, and, freeing herself, studied his face scrutinizingly.

"Yes, it is!" she said, convinced, "yet I can't believe it. Paul, you have deceived me."

"Have I, June? Be honest. Am I not all I ever represented myself to be? Have I anything

to lose by this divulgence? If so, could I not have avoided this meeting, or married you while in France? I willed you should know this, love, but I wished you to be sure of yourself, unbiassed by circumstances."

She laughed. "You are my own Dr. Paul, I see, Howard or Hobson. To think! the boy I found swung headlong from a beam, trying to lengthen himself!"

"And all for love of you!" he laughed. "Ah, June, you could not know its strength then."

"No; but I did realize your love for books full of horrible skeletons."

They dined with Ellice that day, Dick's amazement being as large at his sister's recognition of Ike, as at that gentleman's strange transformation. In the cool of the afternoon the visitors turned homeward.

"Paul, I've a good mind to turn you off now," said June, as she nestled close to his side.

"You had better cheat yourself to tease me!" he returned, laughingly. "June, I wish you

could have seen me in Dr. Fosby's office yesterday. The dear old gentleman was so amazed! It seemed impossible to make him understand. I introduced myself first as a friend of Dr. David Howard, and related to him several incidents connected with his decease. Then he inquired about the doctor's adopted son; and when I assured him that I was that person he would not believe me. When really convinced he shed tears. 'Bryony expected you back,' he said; 'but after Howard adopted you I gave you up. I'm growing very old. Be my boy now, and take my practice.'"

"And what did you say?" cried June, a little eagerly for a young lady who had just decided to sever the relations between them.

"Why, I said 'yes,'" smiling. "Are you very glad, little girl? I expected this when I came."

"And yet did not tell me?"

"No. I wanted to prove you, June. The woman who would part with father and home willingly, and return to France with me, must

love me truly. Don't blame me. Remember, I was jilted twice."

"Now, Paul, that's mean to twit me with it."

"Is it? Well, I did not realize that. I promise not to do it again. I assure you it does not trouble me in the least. But, June, old Dr. Fosby is anxious to see you. We must go there tomorrow."

"I knew his face was familiar," said Jetty, that evening, on hearing the news from Rose. And when alone she added, her face crimson with blushes, "How could I ever think of him? I'd be scared of him! 'Miss June, now, just suits him, with her pretty, sprightly ways. Well, he knew best, so did God. He wasn't my 'own,' after all my thinkin'; but it led me to Him as calls such trash as me his own, and I received him. But I can't help wishin' I had never talked so to that doctor."

She need not have been troubled. Dr. Hobson never acted as if he remembered that passage in his life, and she soon forgot her discomfiture in his presence.

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Dr. Hobson resides in the great stone front formerly Dr. Fosby's residence, wonderful to his boyhood. His wife has become quite reconciled to a "pill and nostrum man," and even visits his patients occasionally, giving him fresh proofs constantly of her ability to rouse the despondent. He says "she is a wonderful woman;" she says that is one of the weak points of her strong, brave husband, his admiration of her. Another, which develops fast, is an admiration of the little flock gathering at her side.

Bry is glad they live so near her, though distance would not make the difference with her now that it did in other days. The young doctor has been very successful in his treatment of her; and, though she must always be lame, she moves with a degree of quickness, and painlessless, very wonderful to her, on the patent crutches he modelled for her himself.

She is very much like herself, still using occasionally, in her quaint style, her old word "com-

fortable," though it does not appear as often as formerly. There is a little more roundness to her limbs, perhaps, a little more pink on her cheek, a fresher spring to her laugh. But this is perfectly natural, as she goes out into the fresh air every day now. She has days of pain, to be sure, but they are only occasional.

Dr. Hobson's family and Dick Perkins' quarrel about her incessantly. Rose borrows her occasionally, and Mr. Gardenell looks for a visit from her every summer. There is a great clamor for her, among the children, especially at Christmas time; her stories are such merry, babbling, healthful ones we do not wonder.

It would be a good thing could she divide herself indefinitely at such times. As it is, she does the next best thing—I hope you will not like her less for knowing it—she writes stories for the children. Not big, novelish things, you know, but primrosy, hawthorny ones, that make your very senses ache with pleasure and with longing to be a child again, providing you are not one

already. We know lots of fifty-year olders who are not a day over five years old until the story is ended, and for at least thirty-six hours after.

All this came about through Becky Cartwright. So, if anyone is to blame, it is she. She realized Bry's faculty for the work and pressed her to it. That is how it happens that Bry owns a horse and basket-wagon, a wonderful affair Christmas times, when it is stuffed to overflowing by numerous Great-hearts, who know she is just the fairy to scatter their bounty.

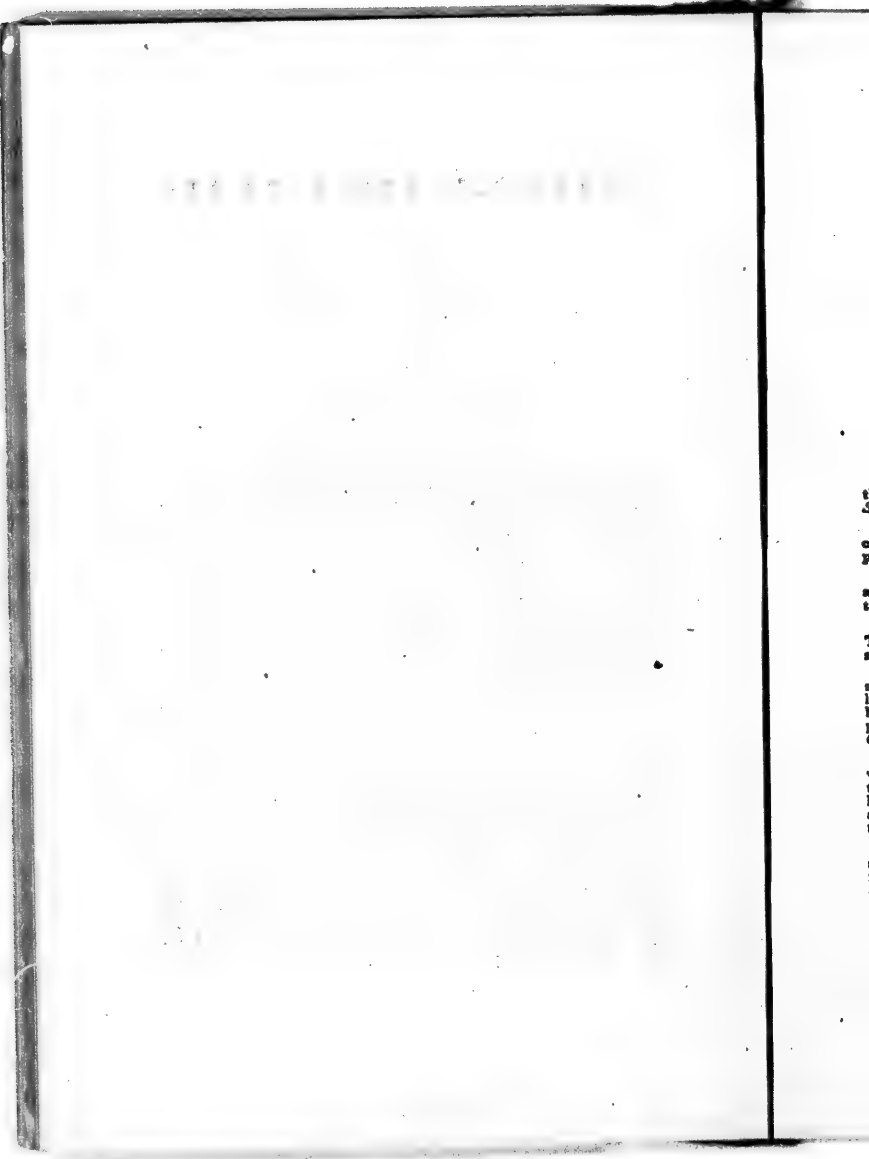
The rest of Our Street acquaintances are changed also, as who changes not in this changeful world? Hephzibah and Beulah pay occasional visits to their prosperous brother; Hudworth still sells periodicals; Kiddy Langdon has given up her shop, no longer needing its support. As to Widow Grafham, perhaps Becky's words, in a late poem, best describe her:

" And mother, with her tireless hands —
Those wrinkled, withered, tireless hands —
With silvery threads amid her bands —
Waits longing for her rest."

I hope, when you visit Our City, reader, you will make it a point to see Bryony Perkins. She will make you very "*comfortable*," especially if you come as the friend of Rev. Herbert Gardenell or Becky Cartwright.

She still resides in the pretty cottage, with the south bay window, on the left side of Our Street, as you go towards the Oaks.

Don't forget the name, Bryony Perkins ; or the house and street, number ought-O-naught (000) Our Street. Give my love to her when you call.



JOHN BREMM:

HIS PRISON BARS.

BY

ALPHONSO A. HOPKINS.

Square 16mo; 260 pp. Price, \$1.25.

THE book shows the marks of a genius in the field of romance, and the author can well congratulate himself on his abundant success.—*Syracuse Daily Standard*.

We have read the book with absorbing interest. . . . We can give nothing of the solemn pathos that runs through the story. It must be read to be appreciated.—*Hamilton Republican*.

THE story is admirably wrought; written in Mr. Hopkins' unusually clear and graphic style, is true to nature, and holds the reader's attention and interest to the end.—*The Baptist Union*.

In developing his story, Mr. Hopkins displays the skill of a true artist. The minor characters are well drawn, and the dramatic incidents, in which the story abounds, are graphically represented.—*Albany Evening Journal*.

THE story is as helpful and sweet as that of David Copperfield's "pure, unsullied page." The story is a thoroughly American one; its descriptions of life in the political circles of State and National Capitals are vivid, sometimes brilliant, and always truthful. The temptations which beset the aspirant for political honors in this country are delineated with mastery skill.—*Buffalo Courier*.

MR. HOPKINS has had considerable experience in political life in this city, which we recognize as the original of "Baylan," the Capital City which forms the center for very much of the grouping in the work. And he knows what life in the army is. He is also a fine poet, a pleasant lecturer, a clear thinker, and thoroughly conscientious. In his novel, founded on fact, he has weaved the lessons of all this varied experience.—*Albany Argus*.

It is fresh, vigorous, natural, "with no nonsense about it," and from a new, and we believe comparatively young pen. It is a book that gives promise of a future, and is especially noticeable for being a temperance book without being at all intemperate or silly. . . . It is a pathetic story, and its moral is admirably voiced in the beautiful and touching sermon which concludes it, and it is one of the most effectively written—in straightforward Saxon fashion—and readable books, in its flow and incident, that we have had for a long time.—*New York Evening Mail*.

RUTH ERSKINE'S CROSSES. By Pansy. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. \$1.50.

"Among the few prominent publishing houses which make a specialty of Sunday-school literature, none deserves more highly at the hands of the Christian public than D. Lothrop & Co. Their presses seem consecrated to the making of books and papers — pure, wholesome, and safe — for the young. In this day, when money-making seems to be along the line of the issuance of vicious and trashy stuff, it is a matter for congratulation that purely secular houses can sternly resist the tide and devote themselves to the publication of only what is elevating and good.

These remarks are called forth by reading the above book, and after a long acquaintance with the publications of this house.

Two years ago the writer suggested in these columns to Mrs. Alden, who writes under the pseudonym of "Pansy," that she follow up the "Four Girls at Chautauqua" and the "Chautauqua Girls at Home" with an account of their life after marriage, their *real* life, as marriage is often made an excuse for the withdrawal of young people from active service in the Church. In "Ruth Erskine's Crosses" we find an answer, in part, to our suggestion. We say in part, for the book does not wholly meet our thought, and yet we are not quite sure but that our disappointment is to be found in the fact that Pansy has given us *real* and not *ideal* life.

The book is a worthy contribution to the series, and the series ought to be in every Sunday-school and young people's library in the land." — *New York Christian Advocate*.

WORD PICTURES. Thoughts and Descriptions from Popular Authors. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Illustrated, Price \$1.75.—Gilt edges, \$3.00.

This volume is inscribed by the author to "the Memory of My Beloved Mother, Margaret Gouvis Stohm, and of the happy days when we read together." A note of acknowledgment to the authors and the publishers represented, answers as a preface to this compilation. One hundred authors are quoted, among whom many are well-known to all, as Grace Aguilar, Louisa M. Alcott, Charlotte Bronte, Bulwer, Dickens, Disraeli, Amanda M. Douglas, Edward Everett Hale, Hawthorne, Victor Hugo, Jean Ingelow, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Charles Reade, Mrs. Stowe, and Bayard Taylor. There is no lack of deep meanings in this collection, and of course all the popular authors could not be represented in a small volume. Forty-two pages of the three hundred and fifteen are devoted to various subjects under the title "Thoughts." The remaining pages are classed "Descriptions and Scenes."

Some selections seem to be chosen to illustrate certain styles of picturesque narrative and are allotted several pages, while others are terse enough to be contained in a few lines. Dickens is awarded the first place, and the opening thoughts are concerning "children." "I love these little people; and it is not a slight thing when they who are so fresh from God love us."

Here is something for the educators of women, by George MacDonald; "Men like women to reflect them; but the woman who can only reflect a man and is nothing in herself will never be of much service to him."

This is a picture, sure enough, from Mrs. Whitney: "She was like a breeze that set everything fluttering, and left the whole house freshened after she had passed on."

Here some "Words of Truth," by Miss Alcott, bear profound philosophy. "It is an excellent plan to have some place where we can go to be quiet when things vex or grieve us. There are a good many hard times in this life of ours, but we can always bear them if we ask help in the right way."

One more selection from the short speeches must suffice: "No life is all sunshine, nor was it so intended. And yet I think God doesn't mean us to fear the future. We are to take up daily events with hopeful hearts and shape them into a higher form than crude fragments."

Such a book is invaluable in its influence on young people who are just forming their ideas of life. Many of the longer sketches are convenient to take up when one feels like reading, but cannot endure a continuous effort of the mind. A sick person, on recovering enough to be entertained with short readings, would be greatly delighted by judicious use of this attractive kind of medicine for the mind.—*The Liberal Christian.*

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT. By Mary A. Lathbury. With eight masterly character drawings, full page, with poems and exquisite vignettes. Fine binding. Quarto. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$3.00.

We have no hesitation in pronouncing this one of the most attractive presentation books which has been brought out in this city for many seasons. Elegantly bound and superbly illustrated, displaying the utmost art of artist and printer, its literary merit is of the highest order. The author, Miss Mary A. Lathbury, is both artist and poet. In the several poems which make up the book she traces the gradual coming out from the thick darkness of doubt and unbelief into the full broad day of faith and religious trust. They are sweetly and delicately written, and will appeal to many hearts whose experiences have been similar. The drawings with which Miss Lathbury accompanies her poems express in form what her pen has done in words. So full of meaning has she made them that they almost alone tell the story of the doubt, the struggle, the anguish and the conviction which so many have experienced in their attempts to attain to a higher spiritual life. The vignettes are no less artistic and expressive, each one being emblematic of some sentiment contained in the poem to which it belongs. To those who celebrate Christmas as a religious festival as well as to those who are of a thoughtful turn of mind, the volume will have a peculiar value. Most holiday volumes serve only for the season in which they appear, but the one before us possesses those peculiar elements which make it a standard work, unaffected by the lapse of time or seasons.

THE CHILDREN'S ALMANAC. For 1879-80-81-82-83. Edited By Ella Farman. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.

This unique little volume, which for beauty and intrinsic value will compare with many of the high-priced annuals, contains peculiar attractions which will render it one of the best selling books of the season. The calendar—which reaches over five years—gives it a value which the ordinary almanac does not possess. Each month is represented by an original poem from the pen of a distinguished American author, the list of contributors numbering such names as Longfellow, Whittier, Aldrich, Celia Thaxter, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Edgar Fawcett, and others. Accompanying these poems are twelve exquisite drawings on wood by Miss Humphrey, and four beautiful chromo-lithographs by Miss Lathbury. As if these attractions were not enough, the editor has prepared twelve pages of birthday mottoes from the poets, making a single line motto for every day in the year. Blank memoranda leaves are inserted for the benefit of those who wish to put down notes or make record of daily occurrences. Two editions are issued,—one in plain cloth, at 60 cents, and the other with silver-and-gold cover gilt edges, at \$1.00.

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YOUNG FOLKS' HISTORY OF GREECE. By Charlotte M. Yonge. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$1.50.

The second volume of Miss Yonge's series of Histories for Young People takes up *Greece*, and deals with it in an exceedingly interesting manner. The author makes the attempt to trace the story of that country of poetry and fable so as to be intelligible to children. She begins with some of the best known of the Greek myths, which she considers absolutely necessary to the understanding of both the history and of art, and then, taking up the thread of acknowledged history, follows it down to our day. Like the *History of Germany* it is very fully illustrated, and is bound in the same style.

TRUE BLUE. By Mrs. Lucia Chase Bell. Large 16mo. 10 illustrations by Merrill. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.25.

This is a delightful story for girls, and promises to be as popular as any of Miss Alcott's productions. The scene is laid in the far west, and the incidents are such as could only occur in a newly-developed country, where even children are taught to depend upon themselves. "Doc," the warm-hearted, impulsive heroine of the story, is an original character, and one whose ways are well worth copying by those who read her adventures and experiences. The book shows how much can be accomplished in a community by earnest, determined endeavor on the part of a single one of its members, even if that member is a young girl.

True Blue ought to become a standard book in every girl's library.

CHILD TOILERS OF BOSTON STREETS. By Emma E. Brown. With 12 pictures drawn from life by Katherine Peirson. Quarto, with illuminated board covers. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price 50c.

Here is a book which should be read by every Boston boy and girl, to say nothing of the boys and girls who have never been in Boston, and who would like to know something about the various ways in which poor children manage to make a living for themselves and those depending upon them. Miss Brown, the author, personally made the acquaintance of the children here described, saw them at their work, visited them at their homes, and saw how they lived. What she learned during these visits is very interestingly told, and will give young readers who are better off a fair idea of the daily life of the working poor, and the trials and troubles through which they have to pass. Humble as some of the occupations are which are here described, the example of industry and economy set by certain of those who follow them might be profitably imitated. The illustrations by Miss Peirson add to the beauty and interest of the book.

THE STORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. By Lucy Coell White (Mrs. Lillie). Fully illustrated with portraits and views of celebrated spots. 19mo. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$1.25.

This is a book which should find a place in the library of every household. It is from the pen of a distinguished lady now in England, who has peculiar advantages for making it not only interesting, but reliable. It is not a "picked-up" book, hastily put together, and made only to sell, but a carefully and thoroughly compiled work, written in a fascinating and readable manner, and in a style especially adapted to the tastes of young readers. Although comprehensive in its scope it is not wearisome in detail. It contains interesting sketches of Chaucer, Spenser, Bacon, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and many other distinguished writers, with a great deal of interesting information about men and manners of various times. The illustrations are particularly fine, and include portraits of the principal characters, with views of historical buildings and places.

OVERHEAD: WHAT HARRY AND NELLY DISCOVERED IN THE HEAVENS. Illustrated, Quarto. Illuminated cover. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$1.00.

In this charming little volume the author undertakes to teach the rudiments of astronomy to children, without making it seem like study. It is written in conversational style, the characters consisting of Professor Willoughby and several of his young friends. In the course of these conversations a description of the starry heavens is given, the peculiarities of the heavenly bodies are described, and the planetary system explained, together with its various phenomena. All this is done so easily and naturally that at the close of the book the children find that they have learned a great deal of astronomy without knowing it. The text of the book is greatly aided by the illustrations, of which there are many. A thorough perusal of its pages will give young readers a better idea of the distant worlds above and around them than the study of a dry text book for an entire term. Prof. Waldo, of the Cambridge Observatory, furnishes a pleasant introduction, in which he indorses the book from a scientific standpoint.

SIDNEY MARTIN'S CHRISTMAS. By Pansy. Large 16mo., 600 pages. Fully illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$1.50.

Of the multitudes of story books brought out for the holiday season none will be more sought after by young readers than this, one of Mrs. Alden's latest works. It consists of a series of stories written with a special adaptation to the season, and all of them are specially suited to cosy fireside reading. It is safe to say that "Pansy" has never written a dull nor uninteresting story, and the present collection is made up of her sprightliest and best efforts. It is printed on clear white paper, and is beautifully bound.

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